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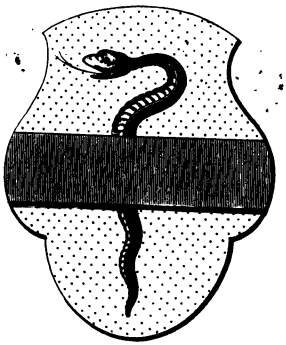

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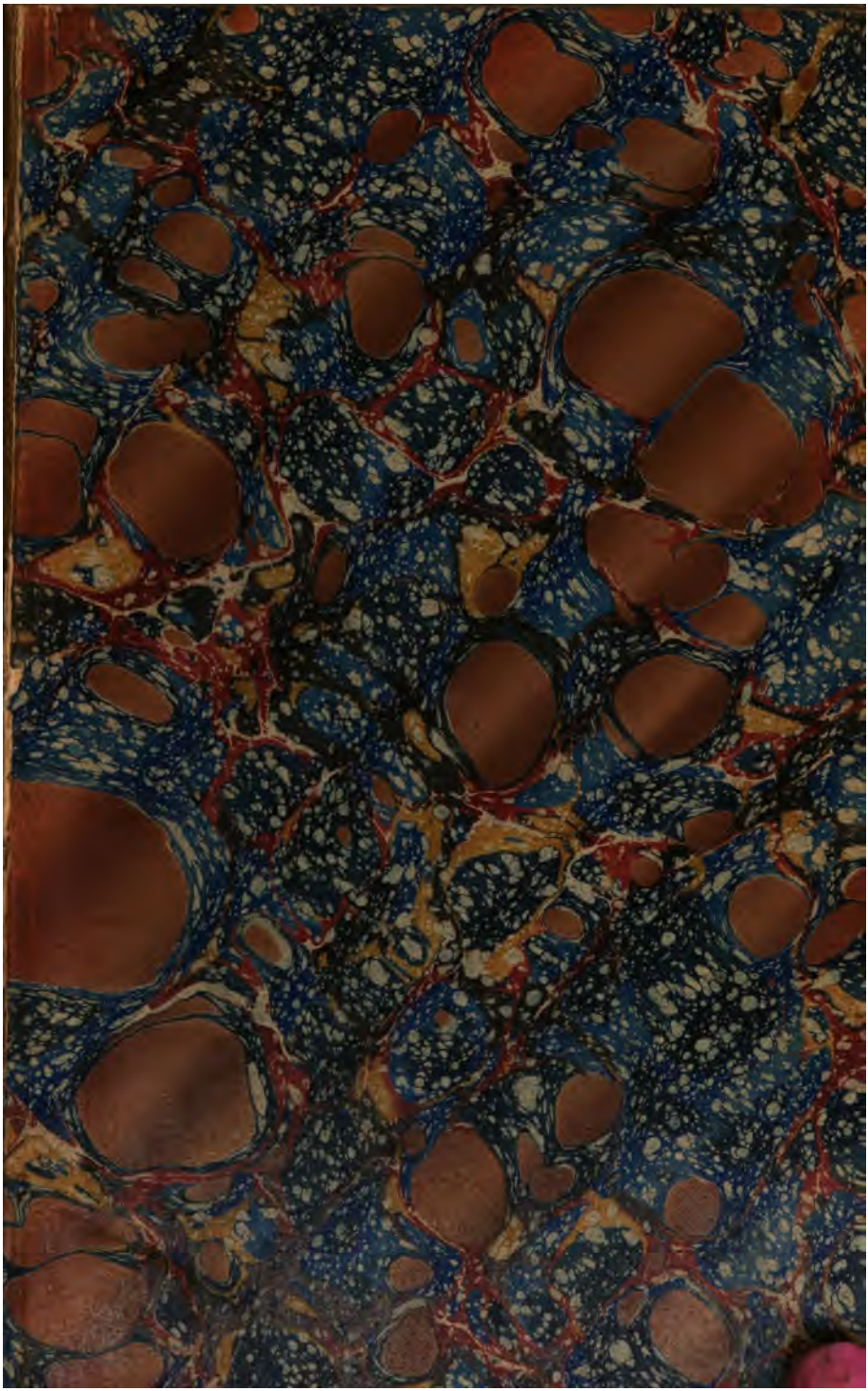

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B232
1792

POEMS

BY

Mrs. ANNA LÆTITIA (Aikin) BARBAULD.

Hæc ſat erit, Divæ, veſtrum cecinisſe poetam,
Dum ſedet, et gracili fiſcellam texit hibiſco.

VIRGIL.

A NEW EDITION, CORRECTED.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN EPISTLE TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JOSEPH JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

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CORSICA.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1769.

——————— A manly race
Of unſubmitting ſpirit, wiſe and brave;
Who ſtill thro' bleeding ages ſtruggled hard
To hold a generous undiminiſh'd ſtate;
Too much in vain!

THOMSON.

HAIL generous CORSICA! unconquer'd iſle!
The fort of freedom; that amidſt the waves
Stands like a rock of adamant, and dares
The wildeſt fury of the beating ſtorm.

And are there yet, in this late ſickly age,
Unkindly to the tow'ring growths of virtue,
Such bold exalted ſpirits? Men whoſe deeds,
To the bright annals of old GREECE oppos'd,

Would throw in ſhades her yet unrival'd name,
And dim the luſtre of her faireſt page!
And glows the flame of LIBERTY ſo ſtrong
In this lone ſpeck of earth! this ſpot obſcure,
Shaggy with woods, and cruſted o'er with rock,
By ſlaves ſurrounded, and by ſlaves oppreſs'd!
What then ſhould BRITONS feel? ſhould they not catch
The warm contagion of heroic ardour,
And kindle at a fire ſo like their own?

Such were the working thoughts which ſwell'd the breaſt
Of generous BOSWEL; when with nobler aim
And views beyond the narrow beaten track
By trivial fancy trod, he turn'd his courſe
From poliſh'd Gallia's ſoft delicious vales,
From the grey reliques of imperial Rome,
From her long galleries of laurel'd ſtone,
Her chiſel'd heroes and her marble gods,

Whoſe dumb majeſtic pomp yet awes the world,
To animated forms of patriot zeal;
Warm in the living majeſty of virtue;
Elate with fearleſs ſpirit; firm; reſolv'd;
By fortune nor ſubdu'd, nor aw'd by power.

How raptur'd fancy burns, while warm in thought
I trace the pictur'd landſcape; while I kiſs
With pilgrim lips devout, the ſacred ſoil
Stain'd with the blood of heroes. CYRNUS, hail!
Hail to thy rocky, deep indented ſhores,
And pointed cliffs, which hear the chafing deep
Inceſſant foaming round their ſhaggy ſides.
Hail to thy winding bays, thy ſhelt'ring ports
And ample harbours, which inviting ſtretch
Their hoſpitable arms to every ſail:
Thy numerous ſtreams, that burſting from the cliffs
Down the ſteep channel'd rock impetuous pour

With grateful murmur: on the fearful edge
Of the rude precipice, thy hamlets brown
And ſtraw-roof'd cots, which from the level vale
Scarce ſeen, amongſt the craggy hanging cliffs
Seem like an eagle's neſt aerial built.
Thy ſwelling mountains, brown with ſolemn ſhade
Of various trees, that wave their giant arms
O'er the rough ſons of freedom; lofty pines,
And hardy fir, and ilex ever green,
And ſpreading cheſnut, with each humbler plant,
And ſhrub of fragrant leaf, that clothes their ſides
With living verdure; whence the cluſt'ring bee
Extracts her golden dews: the ſhining box,
And ſweet-leaved myrtle, aromatic thyme,
The prickly juniper, and the green leaf
Which feeds the ſpinning worm; while glowing bright
Beneath the various foliage, wildly ſpreads
The arbutus, and rears his ſcarlet fruit

Luxuriant, mantling o'er the craggy ſteeps;
And thy own native laurel crowns the ſcene.
Hail to thy ſavage foreſts, awful, deep:
Thy tangled thickets, and thy crowded woods,
The haunt of herds untam'd; which ſullen bound
From rock to rock with fierce unſocial air,
And wilder gaze, as conſcious of the power
That loves to reign amid the lonely ſcenes
Of unquelled nature: precipices huge,
And tumbling torrents; trackleſs deſerts, plains
Fenc'd in with guardian rocks, whoſe quarries teem
With ſhining ſteel, that to the cultur'd fields
And ſunny hills which wave with bearded grain
Defends their homely produce. LIBERTY,
The mountain Goddeſs, loves to range at large
Amid ſuch ſcenes, and on the iron ſoil
Prints her majeſtic ſtep. For theſe ſhe ſcorns
The green enamel'd vales, the velvet lap

Of ſmooth ſavannahs, where the pillow'd head
Of luxury repoſes; balmy gales,
And bowers that breathe of bliſs. For theſe, when firſt
This iſle emerging like a beauteous gem
From the dark boſom of the Tyrrhene main
Rear'd its fair front, ſhe mark'd it for her own,
And with her ſpirit warm'd. Her genuine ſons,
A broken remnant, from the generous ſtock
Of ancient Greece, from Sparta's ſad remains,
True to their high deſcent, preſerv'd unquench'd
The ſacred fire thro' many a barbarous age:
Whom, nor the iron rod of cruel Carthage,
Nor the dread ſceptre of imperial Rome,
Nor bloody Goth, nor griſly Saracen,
Nor the long galling yoke of proud Liguria,
Could cruſh into ſubjection. Still unquell'd
They roſe ſuperior, burſting from their chains,
And claim'd man's deareſt birthright, LIBERTY:

And long, thro' many a hard unequal ſtrife
Maintain'd the glorious conflict; long withſtood
With ſingle arm, the whole collected force
Of haughty Genoa, and ambitious Gaul.
And ſhall withſtand it—Truſt the faithful Muſe!
It is not in the force of mortal arm,
Scarcely in fate, to bind the ſtruggling ſoul
That gall'd by wanton power, indignant ſwells
Againſt oppreſſion; breathing great revenge,
Careleſs of life, determin'd to be free.
And fav'ring heaven approves: for ſee the Man,
Born to exalt his own, and give mankind
A glimpſe of higher natures: juſt, as great;
The ſoul of council, and the nerve of war;
Of high unſhaken ſpirit, tempered ſweet
With ſoft urbanity, and poliſh'd grace,
And attic wit, and gay unſtudied ſmiles:
Whom heaven in ſome propitious hour endow'd

With every purer virtue: gave him all
That lifts the hero, or adorns the man.
Gave him the eye ſublime; the ſearching glance
Keen, ſcanning deep, that ſmites the guilty ſoul
As with a beam from heaven; on his brow
Serene, and ſpacious front, ſet the broad ſeal
Of dignity and rule; then ſmil'd benign
On this fair pattern of a God below,
High wrought, and breath'd into his ſwelling breaſt
The large ambitious wiſh to ſave his country.
Oh beauteous title to immortal fame!
The man devoted to the public, ſtands
In the bright records of ſuperior worth
A ſtep below the ſkies: if he ſucceed,
The firſt fair lot which earth affords, is his;
And if he falls, he falls above a throne.
When ſuch their leader, can the brave deſpair?
Freedom the cauſe, and PAOLI the chief!

Succeſs to your fair hopes! a Britiſh Muſe,
Tho' weak and powerleſs, lifts her fervent voice,
And breathes a prayer for your ſucceſs. Oh could
She ſcatter bleſſings as the morn ſheds dews,
To drop upon your heads! but patient hope
Muſt wait th' appointed hour; ſecure of this,
That never with the indolent and weak
Will freedom deign to dwell; ſhe muſt be ſeiz'd
By that bold arm that wreſtles for the bleſſing:
'Tis heaven's beſt gift, and muſt be bought with blood.
When the ſtorm thickens, when the combat burns,
And pain and death in every horrid ſhape
That can appal the feeble, prowl around,
Then virtue triumphs; then her tow'ring form
Dilates with kindling majeſty; her mien
Breathes a diviner ſpirit, and enlarg'd
Each ſpreading feature, with an ampler port
And bolder tone, exulting, rides the ſtorm,

And joys amidſt the tempeſt. Then ſhe reaps
Her golden harveſt; fruits of nobler growth
And higher reliſh than meridian ſuns
Can ever ripen; fair, heroic deeds,
And godlike action. 'Tis not meats, and drinks,
And balmy airs, and vernal ſuns, and ſhowers
That feed and ripen minds; 'tis toil and danger;
And wreſtling with the ſtubborn gripe of fate;
And war, and ſharp diſtreſs, and paths obſcure
And dubious. The bold ſwimmer joys not ſo
To feel the proud waves under him, and beat
With ſtrong repelling arm the billowy ſurge;
The generous courſer does not ſo exult
To toſs his floating mane againſt the wind,
And neigh amidſt the thunder of the war,
As virtue to oppoſe her ſwelling breaſt
Like a firm ſhield againſt the darts of fate.
And when her ſons in that rough ſchool have learn'd

To ſmile at danger, then the hand that rais'd
Shall huſh the ſtorm, and lead the ſhining train
Of peaceful years in bright proceſſion on.
Then ſhall the ſhepherd's pipe, the muſe's lyre,
On CYRNUS' ſhores be heard: her grateful ſons
With loud acclaim and hymns of cordial praiſe
Shall hail their high deliverers; every name
To virtue dear be from oblivion ſnatch'd
And plac'd among the ſtars: but chiefly thine,
Thine, PAOLI, with ſweeteſt ſound ſhall dwell
On their applauding lips; thy ſacred name,
Endear'd to long poſterity, ſome Muſe,
More worthy of the theme, ſhall conſecrate
To after-ages, and applauding worlds
Shall bleſs the godlike man who ſav'd his country.

* * * * * * * * * * *

So vainly wiſh'd, ſo fondly hop'd the Muſe:
Too fondly hop'd. The iron fates prevail,

And CYRNUS is no more. Her generous ſons,
Leſs vanquiſh'd than o'erwhelm'd, by numbers cruſh'd,
Admir'd, unaided fell. So ſtrives the moon
In dubious battle with the gathering clouds,
And ſtrikes a ſplendour thro' them; till at length
Storms roll'd on ſtorms involve the face of heaven
And quench her ſtruggling fires. Forgive the zeal
That, too preſumptuous, whiſper'd better things,
And read the book of deſtiny amiſs.
Not with the purple colouring of ſucceſs
Is virtue beſt adorn'd: th' attempt is praiſe.
There yet remains a freedom, nobler far
Than kings or ſenates can deſtroy or give;
Beyond the proud oppreſſor's cruel graſp
Seated ſecure, uninjur'd; undeſtroy'd;
Worthy of Gods: The freedom of the mind.

THE INVITATION.

TO MISS B*****.

Hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata, Lycori,
Hic nemus: hic ipſo tecum conſumerer ævo.

VIRGIL.

HEALTH to my friend, and long unbroken years,
By ſtorms unruffled and unſtain'd by tears:
Wing'd by new joys may each white minute fly;
Spring on her cheek, and ſunſhine in her eye:
O'er that dear breaſt, where love and pity ſprings,
May peace eternal ſpread her downy wings:
Sweet beaming hope her path illumine ſtill,
And fair ideas all her fancy fill.
From glittering ſcenes which ſtrike the dazzled ſight
With mimic grandeur and illuſive light,

From idle hurry, and tumultuous noiſe,
From hollow friendſhips, and from ſickly joys,
Will DELIA, at the Muſe's call, retire
To the pure pleaſures rural ſcenes inſpire?
Will ſhe from crowds and buſy cities fly,
Where wreaths of curling ſmoke involve the ſky,
To taſte the grateful ſhade of ſpreading trees,
And drink the ſpirit of the mountain breeze?

When winter's hand the rough'ning year deforms,
And hollow winds foretel approaching ſtorms,
Then Pleaſure, like a bird of paſſage, flies
To brighter climes, and more indulgent ſkies:
Cities and courts allure her ſprightly train,
From the bleak mountain and the naked plain;
And gold and gems with artificial blaze,
Supply the ſickly ſun's declining rays.

But ſoon, returning on the weſtern gale,
She ſeeks the boſom of the graſſy vale:
There, wrapt in careleſs eaſe, attunes her lyre
To the wild warblings of the woodland quire:
The daiſied turf her humble throne ſupplies,
And early primroſes around her riſe.
We'll follow where the ſmiling goddeſs leads,
Thro' tangled foreſts or enamel'd meads;
O'er pathleſs hills her airy form we'll chaſe,
In ſilent glades her fairy footſteps trace:
Small pains there needs her footſteps to purſue,
She cannot fly from friendſhip, and from you.
Now the glad earth her frozen zone unbinds,
And o'er her boſom breathe the weſtern winds.
Already now the ſnow-drop dares appear,
The firſt pale bloſſom of th' unripen'd year;
As FLORA's breath, by ſome transforming power,
Had chang'd an icicle into a flower:

Its name, and hue, the ſcentleſs plant retains,
And winter lingers in its icy veins.
To theſe ſucceed the violet's duſky blue,
And each inferior flower of fainter hue;
Till riper months the perfect year diſcloſe,
And FLORA cries exulting, See my Roſe!

The Muſe invites, my DELIA haſte away,
And let us ſweetly waſte the careleſs day.
Here gentle ſummits lift their airy brow;
Down the green ſlope here winds the labouring plow;
Here, bath'd by frequent ſhow'rs cool vales are ſeen,
Cloth'd with freſh verdure, and eternal green;
Here ſmooth canals, acroſs th' extended plain,
Stretch their long arms to join the diſtant main *:

* The Duke of Bridgewater's canal, which in many places croſſes the road, and in one is carried by an aqueduct over the river Irwell. Its head is at Worſley, where it is conveyed by deep tunnels under the coal pits, for the purpoſe of loading the boats.

The ſons of toil with many a weary ſtroke
Scoop the hard boſom of the ſolid rock;
Reſiſtleſs, thro' the ſtiff oppoſing clay,
With ſteady patience work their gradual way;
Compel the genius of th' unwilling flood
Thro' the brown horrors of the aged wood;
'Croſs the lone waſte the ſilver urn they pour,
And cheer the barren heath or ſullen moor.
The traveller with pleaſing wonder ſees
The white ſail gleaming thro' the duſky trees;
And views the alter'd landſcape with ſurpriſe,
And doubts the magic ſcenes which round him riſe.
Now, like a flock of ſwans, above his head
Their woven wings the flying veſſels ſpread;
Now meeting ſtreams in artful mazes glide,
While each unmingled pours a ſeparate tide;
Now through the hidden veins of earth they flow,
And viſit ſulphurous mines and caves below;

The ductile ſtreams obey the guiding hand,
And ſocial plenty circles round the land.

But nobler praiſe awaits our green retreats;
The Muſes here have fix'd their ſacred ſeats.
Mark where its ſimple front yon manſion rears,
The nurſery of men for future years!
Here callow chiefs and embryo ſtateſmen lie,
And unfledg'd poets ſhort excurſions try:
While Merſey's gentle current, which too long
By fame neglected, and unknown to ſong,
Between his ruſhy banks, (no poet's theme)
Had crept inglorious, like a vulgar ſtream,
Reflects th' aſcending ſeats with conſcious pride,
And dares to emulate a claſſic tide.
Soft muſic breathes along each op'ning ſhade,
And ſooths the daſhing of his rough caſcade.

With myſtic lines his ſands are figur'd o'er,
And circles trac'd upon the letter'd ſhore.
Beneath his willows rove th' inquiring youth,
And court the fair majeſtic form of truth.
Here nature opens all her ſecret ſprings,
And heav'n-born ſcience plumes her eagle-wings:
Too long had bigot rage, with malice ſwell'd,
Cruſh'd her ſtrong pinions, and her flight with-held;
Too long to check her ardent progreſs ſtrove:
So writhes the ſerpent round the bird of Jove;
Hangs on her flight, reſtrains her tow'ring wing,
Twiſts its dark folds, and points its venom'd ſting.
Yet ſtill (if aught aright the Muſe divine)
Her riſing pride ſhall mock the vain deſign;
On ſounding pinions yet aloft ſhall ſoar,
And thro' the azure deep untravel'd paths explore.
Where ſcience ſmiles, the Muſes join the train;
And gentleſt arts and pureſt manners reign.

Ye generous youth who love this ſtudious ſhade,
How rich a field is to your hopes diſplay'd!
Knowledge to you unlocks the claſſic page;
Aud virtue bloſſoms for a better age.
Oh golden days! oh bright unvalued hours!
What bliſs (did ye but know that bliſs) were yours?
With richeſt ſtores your glowing boſoms fraught,
Perception quick, and luxury of thought;
The high deſigns that heave the labouring ſoul,
Panting for fame, impatient of controul;
And fond enthuſiaſtic thought, that feeds
On pictur'd tales of vaſt heroic deeds;
And quick affections, kindling into flame
At virtue's, or their country's honour'd name;
And ſpirits light, to every joy in tune;
And friendſhip, ardent as a ſummer's noon;
And generous ſcorn of vice's venal tribe;
And proud diſdain of intereſt's ſordid bribe;

And conſcious honour's quick inſtinctive ſenſe;
And ſmiles unforc'd; and eaſy confidence;
And vivid fancy; and clear ſimple truth;
And all the mental bloom of vernal youth.

How bright the ſcene to fancy's eye appears,
Thro' the long perſpective of diſtant years,
When this, this little group their country calls
From academic ſhades and learned halls,
To fix her laws, her ſpirit to ſuſtain,
And light up glory thro' her wide domain!
Their various taſtes in different arts diſplay'd,
Like temper'd harmony of light and ſhade,
With friendly union in one maſs ſhall blend,
And this adorn the ſtate, and that defend.
Theſe the ſequeſter'd ſhade ſhall cheaply pleaſe,
With learned labour, and inglorious eaſe:

While thoſe, impell'd by ſome reſiſtleſs force,
O'er ſeas and rocks ſhall urge their vent'rous courſe;
Rich fruits matur'd by glowing ſuns behold,
And China's groves of vegetable gold;
From every land the various harveſt ſpoil,
And bear the tribute to their native ſoil:
But tell each land (while every toil they ſhare,
Firm to ſuſtain, and reſolute to dare,)
MAN is the nobler growth our realms ſupply,
And SOULS are ripen'd in our northern ſky.

Some, penſive creep along the ſhelly ſhore,
Unfold the ſilky texture of a flower;
With ſharpen'd eyes inſpect an hornet's ſting,
And all the wonders of an inſect's wing.
Some, trace with curious ſearch the hidden cauſe
Of nature's changes, and her various laws;

Untwiſt her beauteous web, diſrobe her charms,
And hunt her to her elemental forms:
Or prove what hidden powers in herbs are found
To quench diſeaſe and cool the burning wound;
With cordial drops the fainting head ſuſtain,
Call back the flitting ſoul, and ſtill the throbs of pain.

The patriot paſſion this ſhall ſtrongly feel;
Ardent, and glowing with undaunted zeal,
With lips of fire ſhall plead his country's cauſe,
And vindicate the majeſty of laws.
This, cloth'd with Britain's thunder, ſpread alarms
Thro' the wide earth, and ſhake the pole with arms.
That, to the ſounding lyre his deeds rehearſe,
Enſhrine his name in ſome immortal verſe,
To long poſterity his praiſe conſign,
And pay a life of hardſhips by a line.

While others, conſecrate to higher aims,
Whoſe hallow'd boſoms glow with purer flames,
Love in their heart, perſuaſion in their tongue,
With words of peace ſhall charm the liſt'ning throng,
Draw the dread veil that wraps th' eternal throne,
And launch our ſouls into the bright unknown.

Here ceaſe my ſong. Such arduous themes require
A maſter's pencil and a poet's fire:
Unequal far ſuch bright deſigns to paint,
Too weak her colours, and her lines too faint,
My drooping Muſe folds up her fluttering wing,
And hides her head in the green lap of ſpring.

THE GROANS OF THE TANKARD.

Dulci digne mero! HORAT.

Of ſtrange events I ſing, and portents dire;
The wondrous themes a reverent ear require:
Tho' ſtrange the tale, the faithful Muſe believe,
And what ſhe ſays with pious awe receive.

'Twas at the ſolemn, ſilent, noon-tide hour,
When hunger rages with deſpotic power,
When the lean ſtudent quits his Hebrew roots
For the groſs nouriſhment of Engliſh fruits,
And throws unfiniſh'd airy ſyſtems by
For ſolid pudding and ſubſtantial pye,
When hungry poets the glad ſummons own,
And leave ſpare Faſt to dine with Gods alone;
Our ſober meal diſpatch'd with ſilent haſte,
The decent grace concludes the ſhort repaſt:

Then, urg'd by thirſt, we caſt impatient eyes
Where deep, capacious, vaſt, of ample ſize,
The TANKARD ſtood, repleniſh'd to the brink
With the cold beverage blue-ey'd Naiads drink.
But lo! a ſudden prodigy appears,
And our chill'd hearts recoil with ſtartling fears;
Its yawning mouth diſclos'd the deep profound,
And in low murmurs breath'd a ſullen ſound;
Cold drops of dew did on the ſides appear;
No finger touch'd it, and no hand was near;
At length th' indignant vaſe its ſilence broke,
Firſt heav'd deep hollow groans, and then diſtinctly ſpoke.

" How chang'd the ſcene! for what unpardon'd crimes
" Have I ſurviv'd to theſe degenerate times?
" I, who was wont the feſtal board to grace,
" And 'midſt the circle lift my honeſt face,

" White o'er with froth, like Etna crown'd with ſnow,
" Which mantled o'er the brown abyſs below,
" Where Ceres mingled with her golden ſtore
" The richer ſpoils of either India's ſhore,
" The dulcet reed the Weſtern iſlands boaſt,
" And ſpicy fruit from Banda's fragrant coaſt.
" At ſolemn feaſts the nectar'd draught I pour'd,
" And often journey'd round the ample board:
" The portly Alderman, the ſtately Mayor,
" And all the furry tribe my worth declare;
" And the keen Sportſman oft, his labours done,
" To me retreating with the ſetting ſun,
" Deep draughts imbib'd, and conquer'd land and ſea,
" And overthrew the pride of France—by me.

" Let meaner clay contain the limpid wave;
" The clay for ſuch an office nature gave;

" Let China's earth, enrich'd with coloured ſtains,
" Pencil'd with gold, and ſtreak'd with azure veins,
" The grateful flavour of the Indian leaf,
" Or Mocho's ſunburnt berry glad receive;
" The nobler metal claims more generous uſe,
" And mine ſhould flow with more exalted juice.
" Did I for this my native bed reſign,
" In the dark bowels of Potoſi's mine?
" Was I for this with violence torn away,
" And dragg'd to regions of the upper day?
" For this the rage of torturing furnace bore,
" From foreign droſs to purge the bright'ning ore?
" For this have I endur'd the fiery teſt,
" And was I ſtamp'd for this with Britain's lofty creſt?

" Unbleſt the day, and luckleſs was the hour
" Which doom'd me to a Preſbyterian's power:

" Fated to ſerve the Puritanic race,

" Whoſe ſlender meal is ſhorter than their grace;

" Whoſe moping ſons no jovial orgies keep;

" Where evening brings no ſummons—but to ſleep;

" No Carnival is even Chriſtmas here,

" And one long Lent involves the meagre year.

" Bear me, ye pow'rs! to ſome more genial ſcene,

" Where on ſoft cuſhions lolls the gouty Dean,

" Or roſy Prebend, with cherubic face,

" With double chin, and paunch of portly grace,

" Who lull'd in downy ſlumbers ſhall agree

" To own no inſpiration but from me.

" Or to ſome ſpacious manſion, Gothic, old,

" Where Comus' ſprightly train their vigils hold;

" There oft exhauſted, and repleniſh'd oft,

" Oh! let me ſtill ſupply th' eternal draught;

" Till care within the deep abyſs be drown'd,

" And thought grows giddy at the vaſt profound."

More had the goblet ſpoke, but lo! appears
An ancient Sibyl furrow'd o'er with years.
Her aſpect ſour, and ſtern ungracious look
With ſudden damp the conſcious veſſel ſtruck:
Chill'd at her touch its mouth it ſlowly clos'd,
And in long ſilence all its griefs repos'd:
Yet ſtill low murmurs creep along the ground,
And the air vibrates with the ſilver ſound.

ON THE BACKWARDNESS OF THE SPRING 1771.

Eſtatem increpitans ſeram, zephyroſque morantes.
VIRGIL.

In vain the ſprightly ſun renews his courſe,
Climbs up th' aſcending ſigns and leads the day,
While long embattled clouds repel his force,
And lazy vapours choak the golden ray.

In vain the ſpring proclaims the new-born year;
No flowers beneath her lingering footſteps ſpring,
No roſy garland binds her flowing hair,
And in her train no feather'd warblers ſing,

Her opening breaſt is ſtain'd with frequent ſhowers,
Her ſtreaming treſſes bath'd in chilling dews,
And ſad before her move the penſive hours,
Whoſe flagging wings no breathing ſweets diffuſe,

Like ſome lone pilgrim, clad in mournful weed,
Whoſe wounded boſom drinks her falling tears,
On whoſe pale cheek relentleſs ſorrows feed,
Whoſe dreary way no ſprightly carol cheers.

Not thus ſhe breath'd on Arno's purple ſhore,
And call'd the Tuſcan Muſes to her bowers;
Not this the robe in Enna's vale ſhe wore,
When Ceres' daughter fill'd her lap with flowers.

Clouds behind clouds in long ſucceſſion riſe,
And heavy ſnows oppreſs the ſpringing green;
The dazzling waſte fatigues the aching eyes,
And fancy droops beneath th' unvaried ſcene.

Indulgent nature, looſe this frozen zone;
Thro' opening ſkies let genial ſun-beams play;
Diſſolving ſnows ſhall their glad impulſe own,
And melt upon the boſom of the May.

VERSES

WRITTEN IN AN ALCOVE.

Jam Cytherea choros ducit Venus imminente Luna.
HORAT.

Now the moon-beam's trembling luſtre
Silvers o'er the dewy green,
And in ſoft and ſhadowy colours
Sweetly paints the chequer'd ſcene.

Here between the opening branches
Streams a flood of ſoften'd light,
There the thick and twiſted foliage
Spreads the browner gloom of night.

This is ſure the haunt of fairies,
In yon cool alcove they play;
Care can never croſs the threſhold,
Care was only made for day.

Far from hence be noiſy clamour,
Sick diſguſt and anxious fear;
Pining grief and waſting anguiſh
Never keep their vigils here.

Tell no tales of ſheeted ſpectres
Riſing from the quiet tomb;
Fairer forms this cell ſhall viſit,
Brighter viſions gild the gloom.

Choral ſongs and ſprightly voices
Echo from her cell ſhall call;
Sweeter, ſweeter than the murmur
Of the diſtant water-fall.

Every rude guſt of paſſion
Lull'd with muſic dies away,
Till within the charmed boſom
None but ſoft affections play:

Soft, as when the evening breezes
Gently ſtir the poplar grove;
Brighter than the ſmile of ſummer,
Sweeter than the breath of love.

Thee, th' enchanted Muſe ſhall follow,
Lissy! to the ruſtic cell,
And each careleſs note repeating
Tune them to her charming ſhell.

Not the Muſe who wreath'd with laurel
Solemn ſtalks with tragic gait,
And in clear and lofty viſion
Sees the future births of fate;

Not the maid who crown'd with cypreſs
Sweeps along in ſcepter'd pall,
And in ſad and ſolemn accents
Mourns the creſted hero's fall;

But that other ſmiling ſiſter,
With the blue and laughing eye,
Singing, in a lighter meaſure,
Strains of woodland harmony:

All unknown to fame and glory,
Eaſy, blithe and debonair,
Crown'd with flowers, her careleſs treſſes
Looſely floating on the air.

Then, when next the ſtar of evening
Softly ſheds the ſilent dew,
Let me in this ruſtic temple,
Lissy! meet the Muſe and you.

THE MOUSE'S PETITION *.

Parcere ſubjectis, & debellare ſuperbos.
VIRGIL.

Oh! hear a penſive priſoner's prayer,
For liberty that ſighs,
And never let thine heart be ſhut
Againſt the wretch's cries.

For here forlorn and ſad I ſit,
Within the wiry grate;
And tremble at th' approaching morn,
Which brings impending fate.

* Found in the trap where he had been confined all night by Dr. Prieſtley, for the ſake of making experiments with different kinds of air.

If e'er thy breaſt with freedom glow'd,
And ſpurn'd a tyrant's chain,
Let not thy ſtrong oppreſſive force
A free-born mouſe detain.

Oh! do not ſtain with guiltleſs blood
Thy hoſpitable hearth;
Nor triumph that thy wiles betray'd
A prize ſo little worth.

The ſcatter'd gleanings of a feaſt
My frugal meals ſupply;
But if thine unrelenting heart
That ſlender boon deny,

The chearful light, the vital air,
Are bleſſings widely given;
Let nature's commoners enjoy
The common gifts of heaven.

The well-taught philoſophic mind
To all compaſſion gives;
Caſts round the world an equal eye,
And feels for all that lives.

If mind, as ancient ſages taught,
A never dying flame,
Still ſhifts thro' matter's varying forms,
In every form the ſame,

Beware, leſt in the worm you cruſh
A brother's ſoul you find;
And tremble leſt thy luckleſs hand
Diſlodge a kindred mind.

Or, if this tranſient gleam of day
Be *all* of life we ſhare,
Let pity plead within thy breaſt
That little *all* to ſpare.

So may thy hoſpitable board
With health and peace be crown'd;
And every charm of heartfelt eaſe
Beneath thy roof be found.

So, when deſtruction lurks unſeen,
Which men, like mice, may ſhare,
May ſome kind angel clear thy path,
And break the hidden ſnare.

TO MRS. P--------,

WITH SOME DRAWINGS OF BIRDS AND INSECTS.

> The kindred arts to pleaſe thee ſhall conſpire,
> One dip the pencil, and one ſtring the lyre.
>
> POPE.

AMANDA bids; at her command again
I ſeize the pencil, or reſume the pen;
No other call my willing hand requires,
And friendſhip, better than a Muſe inſpires.

Painting and poetry are near allied;
The kindred arts two ſiſter Muſes guide;

This charms the eye, that ſteals upon the ear;
There ſounds are tun'd; and colours blended here.
This, with a ſilent touch enchants our eyes,
And bids a gayer, brighter world ariſe:
That, leſs allied to ſenſe, with deeper art
Can pierce the cloſe receſſes of the heart;
By well ſet ſyllables, and potent ſound,
Can rouſe, can chill the breaſt, can ſooth, can wound;
To life adds motion, and to beauty ſoul,
And breathes a ſpirit through the finiſh'd whole:
Each perfects each, in friendly union join'd;
This gives Amanda's form, and that her mind.

But humbler themes my artleſs hand requires,
Nor higher than the feather'd tribe aſpires.
Yet who the various nations can declare
That plough with buſy wing the peopled air?

Theſe cleave the crumbling bark for inſect food;
Thoſe dip their crooked beak in kindred blood;
Some haunt the ruſhy moor, the lonely woods;
Some bathe their ſilver plumage in the floods;
Some fly to man, his houſhold gods implore,
And gather round his hoſpitable door;
Wait the known call, and find protection there
From all the leſſer tyrants of the air.

The tawny EAGLE ſeats his callow brood
High on the cliff, and feaſts his young with blood.
On Snowden's rocks, or Orkney's wide domain,
Whoſe beetling cliffs o'erhang the weſtern main,
The royal bird his lonely kingdom forms
Amidſt the gathering clouds, and ſullen ſtorms:
Thro' the wide waſte of air he darts his ſight,
And holds his ſounding pinions pois'd for flight;

With cruel eye premeditates the war,
And marks his deſtin'd victim from afar:
Deſcending in a whirlwind to the ground,
His pinions like the ruſh of waters ſound;
The faireſt of the fold he bears away,
And to his neſt compels the ſtruggling prey.
He ſcorns the game by meaner hunters tore,
And dips his talons in no vulgar gore.

With lovelier pomp along the graſſy plain
The *ſilver* PHEASANT draws his ſhining train.
On Aſia's myrtle ſhores, by Phaſis' ſtream,
He ſpreads his plumage to the ſunny gleam;
But where the wiry net his flight confines,
He lowers his purple creſt, and inly pines;
The beauteous captive hangs his ruffled wing,
Oppreſt by bondage, and our chilly ſpring.

To claim the verſe, unnumber'd tribes appear
That ſwell the muſic of the vernal year:
Seiz'd with the ſpirit of the kindly May
They ſleek the gloſſy wing, and tune the lay;
With emulative ſtrife the notes prolong,
And pour out all their little ſouls in ſong.
When winter bites upon the naked plain,
Nor food nor ſhelter in the groves remain;
By inſtinct led, a firm united band,
As marſhal'd by ſome ſkilful general's hand,
The congregated nations wing their way
In duſky columns o'er the trackleſs ſea;
In clouds unnumber'd annual hover o'er
The craggy Baſs, or Kilda's utmoſt ſhore:
Thence ſpread their ſails to meet the ſouthern wind,
And leave the gathering tempeſt far behind;
Purſue the circling ſun's indulgent ray,
Courſe the ſwift ſeaſons, and o'ertake the day.

Not ſo the inſect race, ordain'd to keep
The lazy ſabbath of a half-year's ſleep:
Entomb'd, beneath the filmy web they lie,
And wait the influence of a kinder ſky.
When vernal ſun-beams pierce their dark retreat
The heaving tomb diſtends with vital heat;
The full-form'd brood, impatient of their cell,
Start from their trance, and burſt their ſilken ſhell;
Trembling awhile they ſtand, and ſcarcely dare
To launch at once upon the untried air:
At length aſſur'd, they catch the favouring gale,
And leave their ſordid ſpoils, and high in Ether ſail.
So when Rinaldo ſtruck the conſcious rind
He found a nymph in every trunk confin'd;
The foreſt labours with convulſive throes,
The burſting trees the lovely births diſcloſe,
And a gay troop of damſels round him ſtood,
Where late was rugged bark and lifeleſs wood.

Lo, the bright train their radiant w[illegible]s unfold!
With ſilver fring'd, and freckl'd o'er with gold:
On the gay boſom of ſome fragrant flower
They, idly fluttering, live their little hour;
Their life all pleaſure, and their taſk all play,
All ſpring their age, and ſunſhine all their day.
Not ſo the child of ſorrow, wretched *man*,
His courſe with toil concludes, with pain began;
That his high deſtiny he might diſcern,
And in misfortune's ſchool this leſſon learn,
Pleaſure's the portion of th' inferior kind;
But glory, virtue, Heaven for Man deſign'd.

What atom-forms of inſect life appear!
And who can follow nature's pencil here?
Their wings with azure, green, and purple gloſs'd,
Studded with colour'd eyes, with gems emboſs'd,

Inlaid with pearl, and mark'd with various ſtains
Of lively crimſon through their duſky veins.
Some ſhoot like living ſtars athwart the night,
And ſcatter from their wings a vivid light,
To guide the Indian to his tawny loves,
As thro' the woods with cautious ſtep he moves.
See the proud giant of the beetle race;
What ſhining arms his poliſh'd limbs enchaſe!
Like ſome ſtern warrior formidably bright
His ſteely ſides reflect a gleaming light:
On his large forehead ſpreading horns he wears,
And high in air the branching antlers bears:
O'er many an inch extends his wide domain,
And his rich treaſury ſwells with hoarded grain.

Thy friend thus ſtrives to cheat the lonely hour,
With ſong or paint, an inſect or a flower:

Yet, if Amanda praiſe the flowing line,
And bend delighted o'er the gay deſign,
I envy not, nor emulate the fame
Or of the painter's, or the poet's name:
Could I to both with equal claim pretend,
Yet far, far dearer were the name of FRIEND.

CHARACTERS.

-------- ſemper ænabilem.

HORAT.

O BORN to ſooth diſtreſs, and lighten care,
Lively as ſoft, and innocent as fair!
Bleſt with that ſweet ſimplicity of thought
So rarely found, and never to be taught;
Of winning ſpeech, endearing, artleſs, kind,
The lovelieſt pattern of a female mind;
Like ſome fair ſpirit from the realms of reſt
With all her native heaven within her breaſt;
So pure, ſo good, ſhe ſcarce can gueſs at ſin,
But thinks the world without like that within;
Such melting tenderneſs, ſo fond to bleſs,
Her charity almoſt becomes exceſs.

Wealth may be courted, wiſdom be rever'd,
And beauty prais'd, and brutal ſtrength be fear'd;
But goodneſs only can affection move;
And love muſt owe its origin to love.

* * * * * * * * * * *

Illam quicquid agit, quoquo veſtigia flectit,
Componit furtim, ſubſequiturque decor.

TIBUL.

OF gentle manners, and of taſte refin'd,
With all the graces of a poliſh'd mind;
Clear ſenſe and truth ſtill ſhone in all ſhe ſpoke,
And from her lips no idle ſentence broke.
Each nicer elegance of art ſhe knew;
Correctly fair, and regularly true.
Her ready fingers plied with equal ſkill
The pencil's taſk, the needle, or the quill;

So pois'd her feelings, ſo compos'd her ſoul,
So ſubject all to reaſon's calm controul,
One only paſſion, ſtrong and unconfin'd,
Diſturb'd the balance of her even mind:
One paſſion rul'd deſpotic in her breaſt,
In every word, and look, and thought confeſt:
But that was love, and love delights to bleſs
The generous tranſports of a fond exceſs.

ON A LADY'S WRITING.

HER even lines her ſteady temper ſhow,
Neat as her dreſs, and poliſh'd as her brow;
Strong as her judgment, eaſy as her air;
Correct though free, and regular though fair:
And the ſame graces o'er her pen preſide
That form her manners and her footſteps guide.

HYMN TO CONTENT.

---------- natura beatis
Omnibus eſſe dedit, ſi quis cognoverit uti.
CLAUDIAN.

O THOU, the Nymph with placid eye!
O ſeldom found, yet ever nigh!
Receive my temperate vow:
Not all the ſtorms that ſhake the pole
Can e'er diſturb thy halcyon ſoul,
And ſmooth unalter'd brow.

O come, in ſimple veſt array'd,
With all thy ſober cheer diſplay'd,
To bleſs my longing ſight;

Thy mien compos'd, thy even pace,
Thy meek regard, thy matron grace,
And chaſte ſubdued delight.

No more by varying paſſions beat,
O gently guide my pilgrim feet
To find thy hermit cell;
Where in ſome pure and equal ſky
Beneath thy ſoft indulgent eye
The modeſt virtues dwell.

Simplicity in Attic veſt,
And Innocence with candid breaſt,
And clear undaunted eye;
And Hope, who points to diſtant years,
Fair opening thro' this vale of tears
A viſta to the ſky.

There Health, thro' whoſe calm boſom glide
The temperate joys in even tide,
That rarely ebb or flow;
And Patience there, thy ſiſter meek,
Preſents her mild unvarying cheek
To meet the offer'd blow.

Her influence taught the Phrygian ſage
A tyrant maſter's wanton rage
With ſettled ſmiles to meet:
Inur'd to toil and bitter bread
He bow'd his meek ſubmitted head,
And kiſs'd thy ſainted feet.

But thou, oh Nymph retir'd and coy!
In what brown hamlet doſt thou joy
To tell thy tender tale;

The lowlieſt children of the ground,
Moſs-roſe, and violet bloſſom round,
And lily of the vale.

O ſay what ſoft propitious hour
I beſt may chooſe to hail thy power,
And court thy gentle ſway?
When Autumn, friendly to the Muſe,
Shall thy own modeſt tints diffuſe,
And ſhed thy milder day.

When Eve, her dewy ſtar beneath,
Thy balmy ſpirit loves to breathe,
And every ſtorm is laid;
If ſuch an hour was e'er thy choice,
Oft let me hear thy ſoothing voice
Low whiſpering thro' the ſhade.

TO WISDOM.

Dona præſentis rape lætus horæ, ac
Linque ſevera.

HORAT.

O WISDOM! if thy ſoft controul
Can ſooth the ſickneſs of the ſoul,
Can bid the warring paſſions ceaſe,
And breathe the calm of tender peace;
WISDOM! I bleſs thy gentle ſway,
And ever, ever will obey.

But if thou com'ſt with frown auſtere
To nurſe the brood of care and fear;
To bid our ſweeteſt paſſions die,
And leave us in their room a ſigh;

O if thine aſpect ſtern have power
To wither each poor tranſient flower
That cheers this pilgrimage of woe,
And dry the ſprings whence hope ſhould flow;
WISDOM, thine empire I diſclaim,
Thou empty boaſt of pompous name!
In gloomy ſhade of cloiſters dwell,
But never haunt my chearful cell.
Hail to pleaſure's frolic train!
Hail to fancy's golden reign!
Feſtive mirth, and laughter wild,
Free and ſportful as the child!
Hope with eager ſparkling eyes,
And eaſy faith, and fond ſurprife!
Let theſe, in fairy colours dreſt,
For ever ſhare my careleſs breaſt:
Then, tho' wiſe I may not be,
The wiſe themſelves ſhall envy me.

THE ORIGIN OF SONG-WRITING*.

Illic indocto primum se exercuit arcu;
Hei mihi quam doctas nunc habet ille manus!
TIBUL.

WHEN Cupid, wanton boy, was young,
His wings unfledg'd, and rude his tongue,
He loiter'd in Arcadian bowers,
And hid his bow in wreaths of flowers;

* Addreſſed to the Author of Eſſays on Song-Writing.

Or pierc'd ſome fond unguarded heart,
With now and then a random dart;
But heroes ſcorn'd the idle boy,
And love was but a ſhepherd's toy:
When Venus, vex'd to ſee her child
Amid the foreſts thus run wild,
Would point him out ſome nobler game,
Gods, and godlike men to tame.
She ſeiz'd the boy's reluctant hand,
And led him to the virgin band,
Where the ſiſter Muſes round
Swell the deep majeſtic ſound;
And in ſolemn ſtrains unite,
Breathing chaſte, ſevere delight;
Songs of chiefs, and heroes old,
In unſubmitting virtue bold:
Of even valour's temperate heat,
And toils, to ſtubborn patience ſweet;

Of nodding plumes, and burniſh'd arms,
And glory's bright terrific charms.

The potent ſounds like lightning dart
Reſiſtleſs thro' the glowing heart;
Of power to lift the fixed ſoul
High o'er fortune's proud controul;
Kindling deep, prophetic muſing;
Love of beauteous death infuſing;
Scorn, and unconquerable hate
Of tyrant pride's unhallow'd ſtate.
The boy abaſh'd, and half afraid,
Beheld each chaſte immortal maid:
Pallas ſpread her Egis there;
Mars ſtood by with threat'ning air;
And ſtern Diana's icy look
With ſudden chill his boſom ſtruck.

Daughters of Jove receive the child,
The queen of beauty ſaid, and ſmil'd;
(Her roſy breath perfum'd the air,
And ſcatter'd ſweet contagion there;
Relenting nature learn'd to languiſh,
And ſicken'd with delightful anguiſh:)
Receive him, artleſs yet and young;
Refine his air and ſmooth his tongue:
Conduct him thro' your fav'rite bowers,
Enrich'd with fair perennial flowers
To ſolemn ſhades, and ſprings that lie
Remote from each unhallow'd eye;
Teach him to ſpell thoſe myſtic names
That kindle bright immortal flames;
And guide his young unpractis'd feet
To reach coy learning's lofty ſeat.

Ah, luckleſs hour! miſtaken maids,
When Cupid ſought the Muſe's ſhades!
Of their ſweeteſt notes beguil'd,
By the ſly inſidious child,
Now of power his darts are found
Twice ten thouſand times to wound.
Now no more the ſlacken'd ſtrings
Breathe of high immortal things,
But Cupid tunes the Muſe's lyre
To languid notes of ſoft deſire.
In every clime, in every tongue,
'Tis love inſpires the poet's ſong:
Hence Sappho's ſoft infectious page;
Monimia's woe; Othello's rage;
Abandon'd Dido's fruitleſs prayer;
And Eloiſa's long deſpair;

The garland bleſt with many a vow,
For haughty Sachariſſa's brow;
And, waſh'd with tears, the mournful verſe
That Petrarch laid on Laura's herſe.

But more than all the ſiſter quire,
Muſic confeſs'd the pleaſing fire.
Here ſovereign Cupid reign'd alone;
Muſic and ſong were all his own.
Sweet, as in old Arcadian plains,
The Britiſh pipe has caught the ſtrains:
And where the Tweed's pure current glides,
Or Liffy rolls her limpid tides,
Or Thames his oozy waters leads
Thro' rural bowers or yellow meads,
With many an old romantic tale
Has chear'd the lone ſequeſter'd vale;

With many a ſweet and tender lay
Deceiv'd the tireſome ſummer-day.

'Tis yours to cull with happy art
Each meaning verſe that ſpeaks the heart;
And fair array'd, in order meet,
To lay the wreath at beauty's feet.

SONGS.

SONG I.

Come here, fond youth, whoe'er thou be,
That boaſts to love as well as me;
And if thy breaſt have felt ſo wide a wound,
Come hither and thy flame approve;
I'll teach thee what it is to love,
And by what marks true paſſion may be found.

It is to be all bath'd in tears,
To live upon a ſmile for years;
To lie whole ages at a beauty's feet·

To kneel, to languiſh and implore;
And ſtill tho' ſhe diſdain, adore:
It is to do all this, and think thy ſufferings ſweet.

It is to gaze upon her eyes
With eager joy and fond ſurpriſe;
Yet temper'd with ſuch chaſte and awful fear
As wretches feel who wait their doom;
Nor muſt one ruder thought preſume
Tho' but in whiſpers breath'd, to meet her ear.

It is to hope, tho' hope were loſt;
Tho' heaven and earth thy paſſion croſt;
Tho' ſhe were bright as ſainted queens above,
And thou the leaſt and meaneſt ſwain
That folds his flock upon the plain,
Yet if thou dar'ſt not hope, thou doſt not love.

It is to quench thy joy in tears;
To nurſe ſtrange doubts and groundleſs fears:
If pangs of jealouſy thou haſt not prov'd,
Tho' ſhe were fonder and more true
Than any nymph old poets drew,
Oh never dream again that thou haſt lov'd.

If when the darling maid is gone,
Thou doſt not ſeek to be alone,
Wrapt in a pleaſing trance of tender woe;
And muſe, and fold thy languid arms,
Feeding thy fancy on her charms,
Thou doſt not love, for love is nouriſh'd ſo.

If any hopes thy boſom ſhare
But thoſe which love has planted there,
Or any cares but his thy breaſt enthrall,

Thou never yet his power haſt known;
Love ſits on a deſpotic throne,
And reigns a tyrant, if he reigns at all.

Now if thou art ſo loſt a thing,
Here all thy tender ſorrows bring,
And prove whoſe patience longeſt can endure.
We'll ſtrive whoſe fancy ſhall be loſt
In dreams of fondeſt paſſion moſt;
For if thou thus haſt lov'd, oh never hope a cure!

SONG II.

If ever thou didſt joy to bind
Two hearts in equal paſſion join'd,

O ſon of VENUS! hear me now,
And bid FLORELLA bleſs my vow.

If any bliſs reſerv'd for me
Thou in the leaves of fate ſhould'ſt ſee;
If any white propitious hour,
Pregnant with hoarded joys in ſtore;

Now, now the mighty treaſure give,
In her for whom alone I live;
In ſterling love pay all the ſum,
And I'll abſolve the fates to come.

In all the pride of full-blown charms
Yield her, relenting, to my arms:
Her boſom touch with ſoft deſires,
And let her feel what ſhe inſpires.

But, CUPID, if thine aid be vain
The dear reluctant maid to gain;
If ſtill with cold averted eyes
She daſh my hopes, and ſcorn my ſighs;

O! grant ('tis all I aſk of thee)
That I no more may change than ſhe;
But ſtill with duteous zeal love on,
When every gleam of hope is gone.

Leave me then alone to languiſh;
Think not time can heal my anguiſh;
Pity the woes which I endure;
But never, never grant a cure.

SONG III.

SYLVIA. LEAVE me, ſimple ſhepherd, leave me;
Drag no more a hopeleſs chain:
I cannot like, nor would deceive thee;
Love the maid that loves again.

CORIN. Tho' more gentle nymphs ſurround me,
Kindly pitying what I feel,
Only you have power to wound me;
SYLVIA, only you can heal.

SYLVIA. CORIN, ceaſe this idle teaſing;
Love that's forc'd is harſh and ſour:
If the lover be diſpleaſing,
To perſiſt diſguſts the more.

CORIN. 'Tis in vain, in vain to fly me,
SYLVIA, I will ſtill purſue;
Twenty thouſand times deny me,
I will kneel and weep anew.

SYLVIA. CUPID ne'er ſhall make me languiſh,
I was born averſe to love;
Lovers' ſighs, and tears, and anguiſh,
Mirth and paſtime to me prove.

CORIN. Still I vow with patient duty
Thus to meet your proudeſt ſcorn;
You for unrelenting beauty,
I for conſtant love was born.

But the fates had not conſented,
Since they both did fickle prove;
Of her ſcorn the maid repented,
And the ſhepherd—of his love.

SONG IV.

When gentle Celia firſt I knew,
A breaſt ſo good, ſo kind, ſo true,
Reaſon and taſte approv'd;
Pleas'd to indulge ſo pure a flame,
I call'd it by too ſoft a name,
And fondly thought I lov'd.

Till Chloris came: with ſad ſurpriſe
I felt the light'ning of her eyes
Thro' all my ſenſes run;
All glowing with reſiſtleſs charms,
She fill'd my breaſt with new alarms,
I ſaw, and was undone.

O CELIA! dear unhappy maid,
Forbear the weakneſs to upbraid
Which ought your ſcorn to move;
I know this beauty falſe and vain,
I know ſhe triumphs in my pain,
Yet ſtill I feel I love.

Thy gentle ſmiles no more can pleaſe,
Nor can thy ſofteſt friendſhip eaſe
The torments I endure;
Think what that wounded breaſt muſt feel
Which truth and kindneſs cannot heal,
Nor even thy pity cure.

Oft ſhall I curſe my iron chain,
And wiſh again thy milder reign
With long and vain regret;

All that I can, to thee I give,
And could I ſtill to reaſon live
I were thy captive yet.

But paſſion's wild impetuous ſea
Hurries me far from peace and thee;
'Twere vain to ſtruggle more
Thus the poor ſailor ſlumbering lies,
While ſwelling tides around him riſe,
And puſh his bark from ſhore.

In vain he ſpreads his helpleſs arms,
His pitying friends with fond alarms
In vain deplore his ſtate;
Still far and farther from the coaſt,
On the high ſurge his bark is toſt,
And foundering yields to fate.

SONG V.

As near a weeping ſpring reclin'd
The beauteous ARAMINTA pin'd,
And mourn'd a falſe ungrateful youth:
While dying echoes caught the ſound,
And ſpread the ſoft complaints around
Of broken vows and alter'd truth;

An aged ſhepherd heard her moan,
And thus in pity's kindeſt tone
Addreſs'd the loſt deſpairing maid:
Ceaſe, ceaſe unhappy fair to grieve,
For ſounds, tho' ſweet, can ne'er relieve
A breaking heart by love betray'd.

Why ſhouldſt thou waſte ſuch precious ſhowers,
That fall like dew on wither'd flowers,
But dying paſſion ne'er reſtor'd?
In beauty's empire is no mean,
And woman, either ſlave or queen,
Is quickly ſcorn'd when not ador'd.

Thoſe liquid pearls from either eye,
Which might an eaſtern empire buy,
Unvalued here and fruitleſs fall;
No art the ſeaſon can renew
When love was young, and DAMON true;
No tears a wandering heart recall.

Ceaſe, ceaſe to grieve, thy tears are vain,
Should thoſe fair orbs in drops of rain
Vie with a weeping ſouthern ſky:

For hearts o'ercome with love and grief
All nature yields but one relief;
Die, hapleſs ARAMINTA, die.

SONG VI.

WHEN firſt upon your tender cheek
I ſaw the morn of beauty break
With mild and chearing beam,
I bow'd before your infant ſhrine,
The earlieſt ſighs you had were mine,
And you my darling theme.

I ſaw you in that opening morn
For beauty's boundleſs empire born,
And firſt confeſs'd your ſway;

And ere your thoughts, devoid of art,
Could learn the value of a heart,
I gave my heart away.

I watch'd the dawn of every grace,
And gazed upon that angel face,
While yet 'twas ſafe to gaze;
And fondly bleſs'd each riſing charm,
Nor thought ſuch innocence could harm
The peace of future days.

But now deſpotic o'er the plains
The awful noon of beauty reigns,
And kneeling crowds adore;
Its beams ariſe too fiercely bright,
Danger and death attend the ſight,
And I muſt hope no more.

Thus to the riſing God of day
Their early vows the Perſians pay,
And bleſs the ſpreading fire,
Whoſe glowing chariot mounting ſoon
Pours on their heads the burning noon;
They ſicken and expire.

DELIA.

AN ELEGY.

--- tecum ut longæ ſociarem gaudia vitæ,
Inque tuo caderet noſtra ſenecta ſinu.
TIBUL.

YES, DELIA loves! My fondeſt vows are bleſt;
Farewell the memory of her paſt diſdain;
One kind relenting glance has heal'd my breaſt,
And balanc'd in a moment years of pain.

O'er her ſoft cheek conſenting bluſhes move,
And with kind ſtealth her ſecret ſoul betray;
Bluſhes, which uſher in the morn of love,
Sure as the red'ning eaſt foretels the day.

Her tender ſmiles ſhall pay me with delight
For many a bitter pang of jealous fear;
For many an anxious day, and ſleepleſs night,
For many a ſtifled ſigh, and ſilent tear.

DELIA ſhall come, and bleſs my lone retreat;
She does not ſcorn the ſhepherd's lowly life;
She will not bluſh to leave the ſplendid ſeat,
And own the title of a poor man's wife.

The ſimple knot ſhall bind her gather'd hair,
The ruſſet garment claſp her lovely breaſt:
DELIA ſhall mix among the rural fair,
By charms alone diſtinguiſh'd from the reſt.

And meek Simplicity, neglected maid,
Shall bid my fair in native graces ſhine:
She, only ſhe, ſhall lend her modeſt aid,
Chaſte, ſober prieſteſs, at ſweet Beauty's ſhrine!

How ſweet to muſe by murmuring ſprings reclin'd;
Or loitering careleſs in the ſhady grove,
Indulge the gentleſt feelings of the mind,
And pity thoſe who live to aught but love!

When DELIA's hand unlocks her ſhining hair,
And o'er her ſhoulder ſpreads the flowing gold,
Baſe were the man who one bright treſs would ſpare
For all the ore of India's coarſer mold.

By her dear ſide with what content I'd toil,
Patient of any labour in her ſight;
Guide the ſlow plough, or turn the ſtubborn ſoil,
Till the laſt ling'ring beam of doubtful light.

But ſofter taſks divide my DELIA's hours;
To watch the firſtlings at their harmleſs play;
With welcome ſhade to ſcreen the languid flowers,
That ſicken in the ſummer's parching ray.

Oft will ſhe ſtoop amidſt her evening walk,
With tender hand each bruiſed plant to rear;
To bind the drooping lily's broken ſtalk,
And nurſe the bloſſoms of the infant year.

When beating rains forbid our feet to roam,
We'll ſhelter'd ſit, and turn the ſtoried page;
There ſee what paſſions ſhake the lofty dome
With mad ambition or ungovern'd rage:

What headlong ruin oft involves the great;
What conſcious terrors guilty boſoms prove;
What ſtrange and ſudden turns of adverſe fate
Tear the ſad virgin from her plighted love.

DELIA ſhall read, and drop a gentle tear;
Then caſt her eyes around the low-roof'd cot,
And own the fates have dealt more kindly here,
That bleſs'd with only love our little lot.

For love has ſworn (I heard the awful vow)
The wav'ring heart ſhall never be his care
That ſtoops at any baſer ſhrine to bow;
And what he cannot rule, he ſcorns to ſhare.

My heart in DELIA is ſo fully bleſt,
It has no room to lodge another joy;
My peace all leans upon that gentle breaſt,
And only there misfortune can annoy.

Our ſilent hours ſhall ſteal unmark'd away
In one long tender calm of rural peace;
And meaſure many a fair unblemiſh'd day
Of chearful leiſure and poetic eaſe.

The proud unfeeling world their lot ſhall ſcorn
Who 'midſt inglorious ſhades can poorly dwell:
Yet if ſome youth, for gentler paſſions born,
Shall chance to wander near our lowly cell,

His feeling breaſt with purer flames ſhall glow;
And leaving pomp, and ſtate, and cares behind,
Shall own the world has little to beſtow
Where two fond hearts in equal love are join'd.

OVID TO HIS WIFE:

IMITATED FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF HIS TRISTIA.

Jam mea cygneas imitantur tempora plumas,
Inficit & nigras alba feneſta comas.
TRIST. Lib. iv. Eleg. 8.

My aged head now ſtoops its honours low,
Bow'd with the load of fifty winters' ſnow;
And for the raven's gloſſy black aſſumes
The downy whiteneſs of the cygnet's plumes:
Looſe ſcatter'd hairs around my temples ſtray,
And ſpread the mournful ſhade of ſickly grey:
I bend beneath the weight of broken years,
Averſe to change, and chill'd with cauſeleſs fears.

The ſeaſon now invites me to retire
To the dear lares of my houſehold fire;
To homely ſcenes of calm domeſtic peace,
A poet's leiſure, and an old man's eaſe;
To wear the remnant of uncertain life
In the fond boſom of a faithful wife;
In ſafe repoſe my laſt few hours to ſpend,
Nor fearful nor impatient of their end.
Thus a ſafe port the wave-worn veſſels gain,
Nor tempt again the dangers of the main;
Thus the proud ſteed, when youthful glory fades,
And creeping age his ſtiffening limbs invades,
Lies ſtretch'd at eaſe on the luxuriant plain,
And dreams his morning triumphs o'er again.
The hardy veteran from the camp retires,
His joints unſtrung, and feeds his houſehold fires;
Satiate with fame enjoys well-earn'd repoſe,
And ſees his ſtormy day ſerenely cloſe.

Not ſuch my lot! Severer fates decree
My ſhatter'd bark muſt plough an unknown ſea.
Forc'd from my native ſeats and ſacred home,
Friendleſs, alone, thro' Scythian wilds to roam;
With trembling knees o'er unknown hills I go,
Stiff with blue ice and heap'd with drifted ſnow.
Pale ſuns there ſtrike their feeble rays in vain,
Which faintly glance againſt the marble plain:
Red Iſter there, which madly laſh'd the ſhore,
His idle urn ſeal'd up, forgets to roar:
Stern winter in eternal triumph reigns,
Shuts up the bounteous year and ſtarves the plains.
My failing eyes the weary waſte explore,
The ſavage mountains and the dreary ſhore,
And vainly look for ſcenes of old delight;
No lov'd familiar objects meet my ſight;
No long remember'd ſtreams nor conſcious bowers,
Wake the gay memory of youthful hours.

I fondly hop'd, content with learned eaſe,
To walk amidſt cotemporary trees;
In every ſcene ſome fav'rite ſpot to trace,
And meet in all ſome kind domeſtic face;
To ſtretch my limbs upon my native ſoil,
With long vacation from unquiet toil;
Reſign my breath where firſt that breath I drew,
And ſink into the ſpot from whence I grew.
But if my feeble age is doom'd to try
Unuſual ſeaſons and a foreign ſky,
To ſome more genial clime let me repair,
And taſte the healing balm of milder air;
Near to the glowing ſun's directer ray,
And pitch my tent beneath the eye of day.
Could not the winter in my veins ſuffice,
Without the added rage of Scythian ſkies?
The ſnow of time my vital heat exhauſt,
And hoary age without Sarmatian froſt?

Yet ſtorm and tempeſt are of ills the leaſt
Which this inhoſpitable land infeſt:
Society than ſolitude is worſe,
And man to man is ſtill the greateſt curſe.
A ſavage race my fearful ſteps ſurround,
Practis'd in blood and diſciplin'd to wound;
Unknown alike to pity as to fear,
Hard as their ſoil, and as their ſkies ſevere.
Skill'd in each myſtery of direſt art,
They arm with double death the poiſon'd dart;
Uncomb'd and horrid grows their ſpiky hair;
Uncouth their veſture, terrible their air:
The lurking dagger at their ſide hung low,
Leaps in quick vengeance on the hapleſs foe.
No ſtedfaſt faith is here, no ſure repoſe;
An armed truce is all this nation knows:
The rage of battle works, when battles ceaſe;
And wars are brooding in the lap of peace.

Since CÆSAR wills, and I a wretch muſt be,
Let me be ſafe at leaſt in miſery!
To my ſad grave in calm oblivion ſteal,
Nor add the woes of fear to all I feel!
Ye tuneful maids! who once in happier days,
Beneath the myrtle grove inſpir'd my lays,
How ſhall I now your wonted aid implore;
Where ſeek your footſteps on this ſavage ſhore,
Whoſe ruder echoes ne'er were taught to bear
The poet's numbers or the lover's care?

Yet here, for ever here, your bard muſt dwell,
Who ſung of ſports and tender loves ſo well.
Here muſt he live: but when he yields his breath
O let him not be exil'd even in death!
Left mix'd with Scythian ſhades, a Roman ghoſt
Wander on this inhoſpitable coaſt.

CÆSAR no more ſhall urge a wretch's doom;
The bolt of JOVE purſues not in the tomb.
To thee, dear wife, ſome friend with pious care
All that of OVID then remains ſhall bear;
Then will thou weep to ſee me ſo return,
And with fond paſſion claſp my ſilent urn.
O check thy grief, that tender boſom ſpare,
Hurt not thy cheeks, nor ſoil thy flowing hair.
Preſs the pale marble with thy lips, and give
One precious tear, and bid my memory live.
The ſilent duſt ſhall glow at thy command,
And the warm aſhes feel thy pious hand.

TO A LADY,

WITH SOME PAINTED FLOWERS.

---------- tibi lilia plenis
Ecce ferunt nymphæ calathis.

VIRGIL.

FLOWERS to the fair: To you theſe flowers I bring,
And ſtrive to greet you with an earlier ſpring.
Flowers ſweet, and gay, and delicate like you;
Emblems of innocence, and beauty too.
With flowers the Graces bind their yellow hair,
And flowery wreaths conſenting lovers wear.
Flowers, the ſole luxury which nature knew,
In Eden's pure and guiltleſs garden grew.

To loftier forms are rougher taſks aſſign'd;
The ſheltering oak reſiſts the ſtormy wind,
The tougher yew repels invading foes,
And the tall pine for future navies grows;
But this ſoft family, to cares unknown,
Were born for pleaſure and delight alone.
Gay without toil, and lovely without art,
They ſpring to cheer the ſenſe, and glad the heart.
Nor bluſh, my fair, to own you copy theſe;
Your beſt, your ſweeteſt empire is—to pleaſe.

ODE TO SPRING.

Hope waits upon the flowery prime.
WALLER.

SWEET daughter of a rough and ſtormy ſire,
Hoar Winter's blooming child; delightful Spring!
Whoſe unſhorn locks with leaves
And ſwelling buds are crown'd;

From the green iſlands of eternal youth,
(Crown'd with freſh blooms, and ever ſpringing ſhade)
Turn, hither turn thy ſtep,
O thou, whoſe powerful voice

More ſweet than ſofteſt touch of Doric reed,
Or Lydian flute, can ſooth the madding winds,
And thro' the ſtormy deep
Breathe thy own tender calm.

Thee, beſt belov'd! the virgin train await
With ſongs and feſtal rites, and joy to rove
Thy blooming wilds among,
And vales and dewy lawns,

With untir'd feet; and cull thy earlieſt ſweets
To weave freſh garlands for the glowing brow
Of him, the favour'd youth
That prompts their whiſper'd ſigh.

Unlock thy copious ſtores; thoſe tender ſhowers
That drop their ſweetneſs on the infant buds,
And ſilent dews that ſwell
The milky ear's green ſtem,

And feed the flowering oſier's early ſhoots;
And call thoſe winds which thro' the whiſpering boughs
With warm and pleaſant breath
Salute the blowing flowers.

Now let me ſit beneath the whitening thorn,
And mark thy ſpreading tints ſteal o'er the dale;
And watch with patient eye
Thy fair unfolding charms.

O nymph approach! while yet the temperate ſun
With baſhful forehead, thro' the cool moiſt air
Throws his young maiden beams,
And with chaſte kiſſes wooes

The earth's fair boſom; while the ſtreaming veil
Of lucid clouds with kind and frequent ſhade
Protects thy modeſt blooms
From his ſeverer blaze.

Sweet is thy reign, but ſhort: The red dog-ſtar
Shall ſcorch thy treſſes, and the mower's ſcythe
Thy greens, thy flow'rets all,
Remorſeleſs ſhall deſtroy.

Reluctant ſhall I bid thee then farewell;
For O, not all that Autumn's lap contains,
Nor ſummer's ruddieſt fruits,
Can aught for thee atone,

Fair Spring! whoſe ſimpleſt promiſe more delights
Than all their largeſt wealth, and thro' the heart
Each joy and new-born hope
With ſofteſt influence breathes.

VERSES ON MRS. ROWE.

How from the ſummit of the grove ſhe fell,
And left it unharmonious ----------.
YOUNG.

SUCH were the notes our chaſter SAPPHO ſung,
And every Muſe drop'd honey on her tongue.
Bleſt ſhade! how pure a breath of praiſe was thine,
Whoſe ſpotleſs life was faultleſs as thy line:
In whom each worth and every grace conſpire,
The chriſtian's meekneſs and the poet's fire.
Learn'd without pride, a woman without art;
The ſweeteſt manners and the gentleſt heart.
Smooth like her verſe her paſſions learn'd to move,
And her whole ſoul was harmony and love.

Virtue that breaſt without a conflict gain'd,
And eaſy, like a native monarch reign'd.
On earth ſtill favour'd as by Heaven approv'd,
The world applauded, and ALEXIS lov'd.
With love, with health, with fame, and friendſhip bleſt,
And of a chearful heart the conſtant feaſt,
What more of bliſs ſincere could earth beſtow?
What purer heaven could angels taſte below?
But bliſs from earth's vain ſcenes too quickly flies;
The golden cord is broke—ALEXIS dies.
Now in the leafy ſhade, and widow'd grove,
Sad PHILOMELA mourns her abſent love.
Now deep retir'd in FROME's enchanting vale,
She pours her tuneful ſorrows on the gale;
Without one fond reſerve the world diſclaims,
And gives up all her ſoul to heavenly flames.
Yet in no uſeleſs gloom ſhe wore her days;
She lov'd the work, and only ſhun'd the praiſe.

Her pious hand the poor, the mourner bleſt;
Her image liv'd in every kindred breaſt.
THYNN, CARTERET, BLACKMORE, ORRERY approv'd,
And PRIOR prais'd, and noble HERTFORD lov'd;
Seraphic KENN, and tuneful WATTS were thine,
And virtue's nobleſt champions fill'd the line.
Bleſt in thy friendſhips! in thy death too bleſt!
Receiv'd without a pang to endleſs reſt.
Heaven call'd the ſaint matur'd by length of days,
And her pure ſpirit was exhal'd in praiſe.
Bright pattern of thy ſex, be thou my Muſe;
Thy gentle ſweetneſs thro' my ſoul diffuſe:
Let me thy palm, tho' not thy laurel ſhare,
And copy thee in charity and prayer.
Tho' for the bard my lines are far too faint,
Yet in my life let me tranſcribe the ſaint.

TO MISS R----,

ON HER ATTENDANCE UPON HER MOTHER AT BUXTON.

With lenient arts extend a mother's breath.
POPE.

WHEN blooming beauty in the noon of power,
While offer'd joys demand each ſprightly hour,
With all that pomp of charms and winning mien
Which ſure to conquer needs but to be ſeen;
When ſhe, whoſe name the ſofteſt love inſpires,
To the huſh'd chamber of diſeaſe retires,
To watch and weep beſide a parent's bed,
Catch the faint voice, and raiſe the languid head,

What mixt delight each feeling heart muſt warm!
An angel's office ſuits an angel's form.
Thus the tall column graceful rears its head
To prop ſome mould'ring tower with moſs o'erſpread,
Whoſe ſtately piles and arches yet diſplay
The venerable graces of decay:
Thus round the wither'd trunk freſh ſhoots are ſeen
To ſhade their parent with a chearful green.
More health, dear maid! thy ſoothing preſence brings
Than pureſt ſkies, or ſalutary ſprings.
That voice, thoſe looks ſuch healing virtues bear,
Thy ſweet reviving ſmiles might cheer deſpair;
On the pale lips detain the parting breath,
And bid hope bloſſom in the ſhades of death.
Beauty, like thine, could never reach a charm
So powerful to ſubdue, ſo ſure to warm.
On her lov'd child behold the mother gaze,
In weakneſs pleas'd, and ſmiling thro' decays,

And leaning on that breaſt her cares aſſwage;
How ſoft a pillow for declining age!

For this, when that fair frame muſt feel decay,
(Ye fates protract it to a diſtant day)
When thy approach no tumults ſhall impart,
Nor that commanding glance ſtrike thro' the heart,
When meaner beauties ſhall have leave to ſhine,
And crowds divide the homage lately thine,
Not with the tranſient praiſe thoſe charms can boaſt
Shall thy fair fame and gentle deeds be loſt:
Some pious hand ſhall thy weak limbs ſuſtain,
And pay thee back theſe generous cares again;
Thy name ſhall flouriſh by the good approv'd,
Thy memory honour'd, and thy duſt belov'd,

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. JENNINGS*.

Eſt tamen quietè, & puré, & eleganter actæ ætatis,
placida ac lenis ſenectus.

CICERO DE SENECT.

'Tis paſt: dear venerable ſhade, farewell!
Thy blameleſs life thy peaceful death ſhall tell.
Clear to the laſt thy ſetting orb has run;
Pure, bright, and healthy like a froſty ſun:
And late old age with hand indulgent ſhed
Its mildeſt winter on thy favour'd head.

* The Author's Grandmother.

For Heaven prolong'd her life to ſpread its praiſe,
And bleſs'd her with a patriarch's length of days.
The trueſt praiſe was hers, a chearful heart,
Prone to enjoy, and ready to impart.
An Iſraelite indeed, and free from guile,
She ſhow'd that piety and age could ſmile.
Religion had her heart, her cares, her voice;
'Twas her laſt refuge, as her earlieſt choice.
To holy Anna's ſpirit not more dear
The church of Iſrael, and the houſe of prayer.
Her ſpreading offspring of the fourth degree
Fill'd her fond arms, and claſp'd her trembling knee.
Matur'd at length for ſome more perfect ſcene,
Her hopes all bright, her proſpects all ſerene,
Each part of life ſuſtain'd with equal worth,
And not a wiſh left unfulfill'd on earth,
Like a tir'd traveller with ſleep oppreſt,
Within her children's arms ſhe dropt to reſt.

Farewell! thy cheriſh'd image, ever dear,
Shall many a heart with pious love revere:
Long, long ſhall mine her honour'd memory bleſs,
Who gave the deareſt bleſſing I poſſeſs.

HYMNS.

Quid prius dicam ſolitis parentis
Laudibus? qui res hominum, ac Deorum,
Qui mare, ac terras, variiſque mundum
Temperat horis?

HORAT.

HYMN I.

JEHOVAH reigns: let every nation hear,
And at his footſtool bow with holy fear;
Let heaven's high arches echo with his name,
And the wide peopled earth his praiſe proclaim;
Then ſend it down to hell's deep glooms reſounding,
Thro' all her caves in dreadful murmurs ſounding.

He rules with wide and abſolute command
O'er the broad ocean and the ſtedfaſt land:

JEHOVAH reigns, unbounded, and alone,
And all creation hangs beneath his throne:
He reigns alone; let no inferior nature
Uſurp, or ſhare the throne of the Creator.

He ſaw the ſtruggling beams of infant light
Shoot thro' the maſſy gloom of ancient night;
His ſpirit huſh'd the elemental ſtrife,
And brooded o'er the kindling ſeeds of life:
Seaſons and months began the long proceſſion,
And meaſur'd o'er the year in bright ſucceſſion.

The joyful ſun ſprung up th' ethereal way,
Strong as a giant, as a bridegroom gay;
And the pale moon diffus'd her ſhadowy light
Superior o'er the duſky brow of night;
Ten thouſand glittering lamps the ſkies adorning,
Numerous as dew-drops from the womb of morning.

Earth's blooming face with riſing flowers he dreſt,
And ſpread a verdant mantle o'er her breaſt;
Then from the hollow of his hand he pours
The circling water round her winding ſhores,
The new-born world in their cool arms embracing,
And with ſoft murmurs ſtill her banks careſſing.

At length ſhe roſe complete in finiſh'd pride,
All fair and ſpotleſs, like a virgin bride;
Freſh with untarniſh'd luſtre as ſhe ſtood
Her Maker bleſs'd his work, and call'd it good;
The morning-ſtars with joyful acclamation
Exulting ſung, and hail'd the new creation.

Yet this fair world, the creature of a day,
Tho' built by GOD's right hand, muſt paſs away;
And long oblivion creep o'er mortal things,
The fate of empires, and the pride of kings:

Eternal night ſhall veil their proudeſt ſtory,
And drop the curtain o'er all human glory.

The ſun himſelf, with weary clouds oppreſt,
Shall in his ſilent dark pavilion reſt;
His golden urn ſhall broke and uſeleſs lie,
Amidſt the common ruins of the ſky;
The ſtars ruſh headlong in the wild commotion,
And bathe their glittering foreheads in the ocean.

But fix'd, O GOD! for ever ſtands thy throne;
JEHOVAH reigns, a univerſe alone;
Th' eternal fire that feeds each vital flame,
Collected, or diffus'd, is ſtill the ſame.
He dwells within his own unfathom'd eſſence,
And fills all ſpace with his unbounded preſence.

But oh! our higheſt notes the theme debaſe,
And ſilence is our leaſt injurious praiſe:
Ceaſe, ceaſe your ſongs, the daring flight controul,
Revere him in the ſtillneſs of the ſoul;
With ſilent duty meekly bend before him,
And deep within your inmoſt hearts adore him.

HYMN II.

PRAISE to GOD, immortal praiſe *,
For the love that crowns our days;
Bounteous ſource of every joy,
Let thy praiſe our tongues employ;

* ALTHOUGH the fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive ſhall fail, and the fields ſhall yield no meat, the flocks ſhall be cut off from the fold, and there ſhall be no herd in the ſtalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the GOD of my ſalvation.

HABAKKUK, iii. 17, 18.

For the bleſſings of the field,
For the ſtores the gardens yield,
For the vine's exalted juice,
For the generous olive's uſe:

Flocks that whiten all the plain,
Yellow ſheaves of ripen'd grain;
Clouds that drop their fatt'ning dews,
Suns that temperate warmth diffuſe:

All that Spring with bounteous hand
Scatters o'er the ſmiling land:
All that liberal Autumn pours
From her rich o'erflowing ſtores:

Theſe to thee, my GOD, we owe;
Source whence all our bleſſings flow;
And for theſe my ſoul ſhall raiſe
Grateful vows and ſolemn praiſe.

Yet ſhould riſing whirlwinds tear
From its ſtem the ripening ear;
Should the fig-tree's blaſted ſhoot
Drop her green untimely fruit;

Should the vine put forth no more,
Nor the olive yield her ſtore;
Though the ſick'ning flocks ſhould fall,
And the herds deſert the ſtall;

Should thine alter'd hand reſtrain
The early and the latter rain;
Blaſt each opening bud of joy,
And the riſing year deſtroy:

Yet to thee my ſoul ſhould raiſe
Grateful vows, and ſolemn praiſe;
And, when every bleſſing's flown,
Love thee—for thy ſelf alone.

HYMN III.

FOR EASTER SUNDAY.

AGAIN the LORD of life and light
Awakes the kindling ray;
Unſeals the eyelids of the morn,
And pours increaſing day.

O what a night was that, which wrapt
The heathen world in gloom!
O what a ſun which broke this day,
Triumphant from the tomb!

This day be grateful homage paid,
And loud hoſannas ſung;
Let gladneſs dwell in every heart,
And praiſe on every tongue.

Ten thouſand differing lips ſhall join
To hail this welcome morn,
Which ſcatters bleſſings from its wings,
To nations yet unborn.

Jesus, the friend of human kind,
With ſtrong compaſſion mov'd,
Deſcended like a pitying God,
To ſave the ſouls he lov'd.

The powers of darkneſs leagued in vain
To bind his ſoul in death;
He ſhook their kingdom when he fell,
With his expiring breath.

Not long the toils of hell could keep
The hope of Judah's line;
Corruption never could take hold
On aught ſo much divine.

And now his conquering chariot wheels
Aſcend the lofty ſkies;
While broke, beneath his powerful croſs,
Death's iron ſceptre lies.

Exalted high at GOD's right hand,
The LORD of all below,
Thro' him is pardoning love diſpens'd,
And boundleſs bleſſings flow.

And ſtill for erring, guilty man,
A brother's pity flows;
And ſtill his bleeding heart is touch'd
With memory of our woes.

To thee, my Saviour, and my King,
Glad homage let me give;
And ſtand prepar'd like thee to die,
With thee that I may live.

HYMN IV.

BEHOLD, where breathing love divine,
Our dying Maſter ſtands!
His weeping followers gathering round
Receive his laſt commands.

From that mild teacher's parting lips
What tender accents fell!
The gentle precept which he gave
Became its author well.

" Bleſt is the man, whoſe ſoftening heart
" Feels all another's pain;
" To whom the ſupplicating eye
" Was never rais'd in vain.

" Whoſe breaſt expands with generous warmth
" A ſtranger's woes to feel;
" And bleeds in pity o'er the wound
" He wants the power to heal.

" He ſpreads his kind ſupporting arms
" To every child of grief;
" His ſecret bounty largely flows,
" And brings unaſk'd relief.

" To gentle offices of love
" His feet are never ſlow;
" He views thro' mercy's melting eye
" A brother in a foe.

" Peace from the boſom of his GOD,
" My peace to him I give;
" And when he kneels before the throne,
" His trembling ſoul ſhall live.

" To him protection ſhall be ſhewn,
" And mercy from above
" Deſcend on thoſe who thus fulfil
" The perfect law of love."

HYMN V.

AWAKE, my ſoul! lift up thine eyes,
See where thy foes againſt thee riſe,
In long array, a numerous hoſt;
Awake, my ſoul, or thou art loſt.

Here giant danger threat'ning ſtands
Muſtering his pale terrific bands;
There pleaſure's ſilken banners ſpread,
And willing ſouls are captive led.
See where rebellious paſſions rage,
And fierce deſires and luſts engage;

The meaneſt foe of all the train
Has thouſands and ten thouſands ſlain.

Thou tread'ſt upon enchanted ground,
Perils and ſnares beſet thee round;
Beware of all, guard every part,
But moſt, the traitor in thy heart.

'Come then, my ſoul, now learn to wield
'The weight of thine immortal ſhield;'
Put on the armour from above
Of heavenly truth and heavenly love.

The terror and the charm repel,
And powers of earth, and powers of hell;
The Man of Calvary triumph'd here;
Why ſhould his faithful followers fear?

HYMN VI.

PIOUS FRIENDSHIP.

How bleſt the ſacred tie that binds
In union ſweet according minds!
How ſwift the heavenly courſe they run
Whoſe hearts, whoſe faith, whoſe hopes are one!

To each, the ſoul of each how dear,
What jealous love, what holy fear!
How doth the generous flame within
Refine from earth and cleanſe from ſin!

Their ſtreaming tears together flow
For human guilt and mortal woe;
Their ardent prayers together riſe,
Like mingling flames in ſacrifice.

Together both they ſeek the place
Where GOD reveals his awful face;
How high, how ſtrong, their raptures ſwell,
There's none but kindred ſouls can tell.

Nor ſhall the glowing flame expire
When nature droops her ſickening fire;
Then ſhall they meet in realms above
A heaven of joy—becauſe of love.

HYMN VII.

Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.

COME, ſaid JESUS' ſacred voice,
Come and make my paths your choice:
I will guide you to your home;
Weary pilgrim, hither come!

Thou, who houſeleſs, ſole, forlorn,
Long haſt borne the proud world's ſcorn,
Long haſt roamed the barren waſte,
Weary pilgrim, hither haſte!

Ye who, toſſed on beds of pain,
Seek for eaſe, but ſeek in vain,
Ye whoſe ſwollen and ſleepleſs eyes
Watch to ſee the morning riſe;

Ye, by fiercer anguiſh torn,
In ſtrong remorſe for guilt who mourn,
Here repoſe your heavy care,
A wounded ſpirit who can bear!

Sinner, come! for here is found
Balm that flows from every wound;
Peace, that ever ſhall endure,
Reſt eternal, ſacred, ſure.

HYMN VIII.

The world is not their friend, nor the world's law.

Lo where a crowd of Pilgrims toil
  Yon craggy ſteeps among!
Strange their attire, and ſtrange their mien,
  As wild they preſs along.

Their eyes with bitter ſtreaming tears
  Now bend towards the ground,
Now rapt, to heaven their looks they raiſe,
  And burſts of ſong reſound.

And hark! a voice from 'midſt the throng
  Cries, 'Stranger, wouldſt thou know
'Our name, our race, our deſtined home,
  'Our cauſe of joy or woe,

'Our country is Emanuel's land,
'We ſeek that promiſed ſoil;
'The ſongs of Zion chear our hearts,
'While ſtrangers here we toil.

'Oft do our eyes with joy o'erflow,
'And oft are bathed in tears,
'Yet nought but heaven our hopes can raiſe,
'And nought but ſin our fears.

'The flowers that ſpring along the road
'We ſcarcely ſtoop to pluck,
'We walk o'er beds of ſhining ore,
'Nor waſte one wiſhful look:

'We tread the path our Maſter trod,
'We bear the croſs he bore;
'And every thorn that wounds our feet
'His temples pierced before:

'Our powers are oft diſſolved away
'In ecſtaſies of love,
'And while our bodies wander here,
'Our ſouls are fixed above:

'We purge our mortal droſs away,
'Refining as we run;
'But while we die to earth and ſenſe,
'Our heaven is begun.'

AN ADDRESS TO THE DEITY.

Deus eſt quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris.
LUCAN.

GOD of my life! and author of my days!
Permit my feeble voice to liſp thy praiſe;
And trembling, take upon a mortal tongue
That hallowed name to harps of Seraphs ſung.
Yet here the brighteſt Seraphs could no more
Than veil their faces, tremble, and adore.
Worms, angels, men, in every different ſphere
Are equal all, for all are nothing here.
All nature faints beneath the mighty name,
Which nature's works thro' all her parts proclaim.

I feel that name my inmoſt thoughts controul,
And breathe an awful ſtillneſs thro' my ſoul;
As by a charm, the waves of grief ſubſide;
Impetuous paſſion ſtops her headlong tide:
At thy felt preſence all emotions ceaſe,
And my huſh'd ſpirit finds a ſudden peace,
Till every worldly thought within me dies,
And earth's gay pageants vaniſh from my eyes;
Till all my ſenſe is loſt in infinite,
And one vaſt object fills my aching ſight.

But ſoon, alas! this holy calm is broke;
My ſoul ſubmits to wear her wonted yoke;
With ſhackled pinions ſtrives to ſoar in vain,
And mingles with the droſs of earth again.
But he, our gracious Maſter, kind, as juſt,
Knowing our frame, remembers man is duſt.

His ſpirit, ever brooding o'er our mind,
Sees the firſt wiſh to better hopes inclin'd;
Marks the young dawn of every virtuous aim,
And fans the ſmoaking flax into a flame.
His ears are open to the ſofteſt cry,
His grace deſcends to meet the lifted eye;
He reads the language of a ſilent tear,
And ſighs are incenſe from a heart ſincere.
Such are the vows, the ſacrifice I give;
Accept the vow, and bid the ſuppliant live:
From each terreſtrial bondage ſet me free;
Still every wiſh that centers not in thee;
Bid my fond hopes, my vain diſquiets ceaſe,
And point my path to everlaſting peace.

If the ſoft hand of winning pleaſure leads
By living waters, and thro' flow'ry meads,

When all is ſmiling, tranquil, and ſerene,
And vernal beauty paints the flattering ſcene,
Oh! teach me to elude each latent ſnare,
And whiſper to my ſliding heart—beware!
With caution let me hear the Syren's voice,
And doubtful, with a trembling heart, rejoice.

If friendleſs, in a vale of tears I ſtray,
Where briars wound, and thorns perplex my way,
Still let my ſteady ſoul thy goodneſs ſee,
And with ſtrong confidence lay hold on thee;
With equal eye my various lot receive,
Reſigned to die, or reſolute to live;
Prepared to kiſs the ſceptre or the rod,
While GOD is ſeen in all, and all in GOD.

I read his awful name, emblazoned high
With golden letters on the illumined ſky;

Nor leſs the myſtic characters I ſee
Wrought in each flower, inſcribed in every tree;
In every leaf that trembles to the breeze
I hear the voice of GOD among the trees;
With thee in ſhady ſolitudes I walk,
With thee in buſy crowded cities talk,
In every creature own thy forming power,
In each event thy providence adore.
Thy hopes ſhall animate my drooping ſoul,
Thy precepts guide me, and thy fears controul:
Thus ſhall I reſt, unmoved by all alarms,
Secure within the temple of thine arms;
From anxious cares, from gloomy terrors free,
And feel myſelf omnipotent in thee.

Then when the laſt, the cloſing hour draws nigh,
And earth recedes before my ſwimming eye;

When trembling on the doubtful edge of fate
I ſtand, and ſtretch my view to either ſtate;
Teach me to quit this tranſitory ſcene
With decent triumph and a look ſerene;
Teach me to fix my ardent hopes on high,
And having lived to thee, in thee to die.

A

SUMMER EVENING'S MEDITATION.

One ſun by day, by night ten thouſand ſhine.
YOUNG.

'Tis paſt! The ſultry tyrant of the ſouth
Has ſpent his ſhort-liv'd rage; more grateful hours
Move ſilent on; the ſkies no more repel
The dazzled ſight, but with mild maiden beams
Of tempered luſtre, court the cheriſhed eye
To wander o'er their ſphere; where hung aloft
DIAN's bright creſcent, like a ſilver bow
New ſtrung in heaven, lifts high its beamy horns

Impatient for the night, and ſeems to puſh
Her brother down the ſky. Fair VENUS ſhines
Even in the eye of day; with ſweeteſt beam
Propitious ſhines, and ſhakes a trembling flood
Of ſoftened radiance from her dewy locks.
The ſhadows ſpread apace; while meekened Eve,
Her cheek yet warm with bluſhes, ſlow retires
Thro' the Heſperian gardens of the weſt,
And ſhuts the gates of day. 'Tis now the hour
When Contemplation, from her ſunleſs haunts,
The cool damp grotto, or the lonely depth
Of unpierc'd woods, where wrapt in ſolid ſhade
She muſed away the gaudy hours of noon,
And fed on thoughts unripened by the ſun,
Moves forward; and with radiant finger points
To yon blue concave ſwelled by breath divine,
Where, one by one, the living eyes of heaven
Awake, quick kindling o'er the face of ether

One boundleſs blaze; ten thouſand trembling fires,
And dancing luſtres, where the unſteady eye,
Reſtleſs and dazzled, wanders unconfin'd
O'er all this field of glories; ſpacious field,
And worthy of the Maſter: he, whoſe hand
With hieroglyphics elder than the Nile
Inſcribed the myſtic tablet; hung on high
To public gaze, and ſaid, Adore, O man!
The finger of thy GOD. From what pure wells
Of milky light, what ſoft o'erflowing urn,
Are all theſe lamps ſo fill'd? theſe friendly lamps,
For ever ſtreaming o'er the azure deep
To point our path, and light us to our home.
How ſoft they ſlide along their lucid ſpheres!
And ſilent as the foot of time, fulfil
Their deſtined courſes: Nature's ſelf is huſhed,
And, but a ſcattered leaf, which ruſtles thro'

The thick-wove foliage, not a ſound is heard
To break the midnight air; tho' the raiſed ear,
Intenſely liſtening, drinks in every breath.
How deep the ſilence, yet how loud the praiſe!
But are they ſilent all? or is there not
A tongue in every ſtar that talks with man,
And wooes him to be wiſe? nor wooes in vain:
This dead of midnight is the noon of thought,
And wiſdom mounts her zenith with the ſtars.
At this ſtill hour the ſelf-collected ſoul
Turns inward, and beholds a ſtranger there
Of high deſcent, and more than mortal rank;
An embryo GOD; a ſpark of fire divine,
Which muſt burn on for ages, when the ſun
(Fair tranſitory creature of a day!)
Has cloſed his golden eye, and wrapt in ſhades
Forgets his wonted journey thro' the eaſt.

Ye citadels of light, and feats of GODS!
Perhaps my future home, from whence the ſoul
Revolving periods paſt, may oft look back,
With recollected tenderneſs, on all
The various buſy ſcenes ſhe left below,
Its deep laid projects and its ſtrange events,
As on ſome fond and doting tale that ſooth'd
Her infant hours—O be it lawful now
To tread the hallow'd circle of your courts,
And with mute wonder and delighted awe
Approach your burning confines. Seiz'd in thought,
On fancy's wild and roving wing I fail,
From the green borders of the peopled earth,
And the pale moon, her duteous fair attendant;
From ſolitary Mars; from the vaſt orb
Of Jupiter, whoſe huge gigantic bulk
Dances in ether like the lighteſt leaf;
To the dim verge, the ſuburbs of the ſyſtem,

Where cheerleſs Saturn 'midſt his wat'ry moons
Girt with a lucid zone, in gloomy pomp,
Sits like an exiled monarch: fearleſs thence
I launch into the trackleſs deeps of ſpace,
Where, burning round, ten thouſand ſuns appear,
Of elder beam, which aſk no leave to ſhine
Of our terreſtrial ſtar, nor borrow light
From the proud regent of our ſcanty day;
Sons of the morning, firſt-born of creation,
And only leſs than HIM who marks their track,
And guides their fiery wheels. Here muſt I ſtop,
Or is there aught beyond? What hand unſeen
Impels me onward thro' the glowing orbs
Of habitable nature, far remote,
To the dread confines of eternal night,
To ſolitudes of vaſt unpeopled ſpace,
The deſarts of creation, wide and wild;
Where embryo ſyſtems and unkindled ſuns

Sleep in the womb of chaos? fancy droops,
And thought aſtoniſh'd ſtops her bold career.
But oh thou mighty mind! whoſe powerful word
Said, Thus let all things be, and thus they were,
Where ſhall I ſeek thy preſence? how unblamed
Invoke thy dread perfection?
Have the broad eye-lids of the morn beheld thee?
Or does the beamy ſhoulder of Orion
Support thy throne? O look with pity down
On erring, guilty man; not in thy names
Of terror clad; not with thoſe thunders armed
That conſcious Sinai felt, when fear appalled
The ſcatter'd tribes; thou haſt a gentler voice,
That whiſpers comfort to the ſwelling heart,
Abaſh'd, yet longing to behold her Maker.

But now my ſoul, unuſed to ſtretch her powers
In flight ſo daring, drops her weary wing,

And ſeeks again the known accuſtomed ſpot,
Dreſt up with ſun, and ſhade, and lawns, and ſtreams,
A manſion fair and ſpacious for its gueſt,
And full replete with wonders. Let me here,
Content and grateful wait the appointed time,
And ripen for the ſkies: the hour will come
When all theſe ſplendors burſting on my ſight
Shall ſtand unveiled, and to my raviſh'd ſenſe
Unlock the glories of the world unknown.

EPISTLE

TO

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, Esq.

ON THE REJECTION OF THE BILL FOR ABOLISHING

THE SLAVE TRADE.

CEASE, Wilberforce, to urge thy generous aim!
Thy Country knows the ſin, and ſtands the ſhame!
The Preacher, Poet, Senator, in vain
Has rattled in her ſight the Negro's chain;
With his deep groans aſſail'd her ſtartled ear,
And rent the veil that hid his conſtant tear;
Forc'd her averted eyes his ſtripes to ſcan,
Beneath the bloody ſcourge laid bare the man,

Claim'd Pity's tear, urged Conſcience' ſtrong controul
And flaſh'd conviction on her ſhrinking ſoul.
The Muſe, too ſoon awaked, with ready tongue
At Mercy's ſhrine applauſive peans rung;
And Freedom's eager ſons, in vain foretold
A new Aſtrean reign, an age of gold:
She knows and ſhe perſiſts—Still Afric bleeds,
Unchecked, the human traffic ſtill proceeds;
She ſtamps her infamy to future time,
And on her hardened forehead ſeals the crime.

In vain, to thy white ſtandard gathering round,
Wit, Worth, and Parts and Eloquence are found:
In vain, to puſh to birth thy great deſign,
Contending chiefs, and hoſtile virtues join;
All, from conflicting ranks, of power poſſeſt
To rouſe, to melt, or to inform the breaſt.

Where ſeaſoned tools of Avarice prevail,
A Nation's eloquence, combined, muſt fail:
Each flimſy ſophiſtry by turns they try;
The plauſive argument, the daring lye,
The artful gloſs, that moral ſenſe confounds,
Th' acknowledged thirſt of gain that honour wounds:
Bane of ingenuous minds! th' unfeeling ſneer,
Which, ſudden, turns to ſtone the falling tear:
They ſearch aſſiduous, with inverted ſkill,
For forms of wrong, and precedents of ill;
With impious mockery wreſt the ſacred page,
And glean up crimes from each remoter age:
Wrung Nature's tortures, ſhuddering, while you tell,
From ſcoffing fiends burſts forth the laugh of hell;
In Britain's ſenate, Miſery's pangs give birth
To jeſts unſeemly, and to horrid mirth——
Forbear!—thy virtues but provoke our doom,
And ſwell th' account of vengeance yet to come;

For, not unmarked in Heaven's impartial plan,
Shall man, proud worm, contemn his fellow-man?
And injured Afric, by herſelf redreſt,
Darts her own ſerpents at her Tyrant's breaſt.
Each vice, to minds depraved by bondage known,
With ſure contagion faſtens on his own;
In ſickly languors melts his nerveleſs frame,
And blows to rage impetuous Paſſion's flame:
Fermenting ſwift, the fiery venom gains
The milky innocence of infant veins;
There ſwells the ſtubborn will, damps learning's fire,
The whirlwind wakes of uncontrouled deſire,
Sears the young heart to images of wo,
And blaſts the buds of Virtue as they blow.

Lo! where reclined, pale Beauty courts the breeze,
Diffuſed on ſofas of voluptuous eaſe;

With anxious awe, her menial train around,
Catch her faint whiſpers of half-utter'd ſound;
See her, in monſtrous fellowſhip, unite
At once the Scythian, and the Sybarite;
Blending repugnant vices, miſally'd,
Which *frugal* nature purpoſed to divide;
See her, with indolence to fierceneſs join'd,
Of body delicate, infirm of mind,
With languid tones imperious mandates urge;
With arm recumbent wield the houſehold ſcourge;
And with unruffled mien, and placid ſounds,
Contriving torture, and inflicting wounds.

Nor, in their palmy walks and ſpicy groves,
The form benign of rural Pleaſure roves;
No milk-maids' ſong, or hum of village talk,
Sooths the lone poet in his evening walk:

No willing arm the flail unwearyed plies,
Where the mixed ſounds of chearful labour riſe;
No blooming maids, and frolic ſwains are ſeen
To pay gay homage to their harveſt queen:
No heart-expanding ſcenes their eyes muſt prove
Of thriving induſtry, and faithful love:
But ſhrieks and yells diſturb the balmy air,
Dumb ſullen looks of wo announce deſpair,
And angry eyes thro' duſky features glare.
Far from the ſounding laſh the Muſes fly,
And ſenſual riot drowns each finer joy.

Nor leſs from the gay Eaſt, on eſſenced wings,
Breathing unnamed perfumes, Contagion ſprings;
The ſoft luxurious plague alike pervades
The marble palaces, and rural ſhades;
Hence throng'd Auguſta builds her roſy bowers,
And decks in ſummer wreaths her ſmoky towers;

And hence, in ſummer bow'rs, Art's coſtly hand
Pours courtly ſplendours o'er the dazzled land:
The manners melt—One undiſtinguiſh'd blaze
O'erwhelms the ſober pomp of elder days;
Corruption follows with gigantic ſtride,
And ſcarce vouchſafes his ſhameleſs front to hide:
The ſpreading leproſy taints ev'ry part,
Infects each limb, and ſickens at the heart.
Simplicity! moſt dear of rural maids,
Weeping reſigns her violated ſhades:
Stern Independence from his glebe retires,
And anxious Freedom eyes her drooping fires;
By foreign wealth are Britiſh morals chang'd,
And Afric's ſons, and India's, ſmile avenged.

For you, whoſe temper'd ardour long has borne
Untired the labour, and unmoved the ſcorn;

In Virtue's faſti be inſcribed your fame,
And uttered yours with Howard's honour'd name,
Friends of the friendleſs—Hail, ye generous band!
Whoſe efforts yet arreſt Heaven's lifted hand,
Around whoſe ſteady brows, in union bright,
The civic wreath, and Chriſtian's palm unite;
Your merit ſtands, no greater and no leſs,
Without, or with the varniſh of ſucceſs;
But ſeek no more to break a Nation's fall,
For ye have ſav'd yourſelves—and that is all.
Succeeding times your ſtruggles, and their fate,
With mingled ſhame and triumph ſhall relate,
While faithful Hiſtory, in her various page,
Marking the features of this motley age,
To ſhed a glory, and to fix a ſtain,
Tells how you ſtrove, and that you ſtrove in vain.

THE END.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES,

IN

PROSE,

BY

JOHN AIKIN, M.D.

AND

ANNA LÆTITIA BARBAULD.

THE THIRD EDITION.

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ON THE

PROVINCE

OF

COMEDY.

VARIOUS are the methods which art and ingenuity have invented to exhibit a picture of human life and manners. Theſe have differed from each other, both in the mode of repreſentation, and in the particular view of the ſubject which has been taken. With reſpect to the firſt, it is univerſally allowed that the dramatic form is by far the moſt perfect. The circumſtance of

leaving every character to diſplay itſelf in its own proper language, with all the variations of tone and geſture which diſtinguiſh it from others, and which mark every emotion of the mind; and the ſcenic deluſions of dreſs, painting, and machinery, contribute to ſtamp ſuch an appearance of reality upon dramatic repreſentations as no other of the imitative arts can attain. Indeed, when in their perfection, they can ſcarcely be called imitations, but the very things themſelves; and real nature would perhaps appear leſs perfect than her counterfeit.

The Drama has from early antiquity been diſtinguiſhed into the two grand diviſions of Tragedy and Comedy. It would ſeem that the general character of theſe was univerſally underſtood and agreed on, by the adoption of the terms

tragic

tragic and *comic*, derived from them, into the language of every civilized people. The former of theſe is, we know, conſtantly applied to objects of terror and diſtreſs; the latter, to thoſe of mirth and pleaſantry. There is, however, a more comprehenſive diſtinction of our feelings, which it is proper firſt to conſider.

When we examine the emotions produced in our minds by the view of human actions, we ſhall obſerve a diviſion into the *ſerious*, and the *ludicrous*. I do not think it neceſſary to define or analyſe feelings with which all are well acquainted. It is enough to obſerve that ſerious emotions are produced by the diſplay of all the great paſſions which agitate the ſoul, and by all thoſe actions which are under the juriſdiction of the grand rules of religion and morality;

and that ludicrous emotions are excited by the improprieties and inconſiſtencies of conduct or judgment in ſmaller matters; ſuch as the effects of falſe taſte, or trifling paſſions. When we now apply the words *tragic* and *comic*, we ſhall at once perceive that the former can relate ſolely to ſuch ſubjects as occaſion *ſerious*, and the latter to ſuch as occaſion *ludicrous* emotions.

Now, although the practice of writers has frequently introduced ludicrous parts into the compoſition called a Tragedy, and ſerious parts into that called a Comedy, yet it has ever been underſtood that what conſtitutes the eſſential and invariable character of each is ſomething which is expreſſed by the terms *tragic* and *comic*, and comes under the head of *ſerious* or *ludicrous* emotions. Referring therefore to a future conſideration, the pro-

propriety of introducing ſerious parts in a Comedy, I ſhall now lay down the character of Comedy as *a dramatic compoſition, exhibiting a ludicrous picture of human life and manners.*

THERE are two ſources of ludicrous emotions which it is proper here to diſtinguiſh. One of theſe ariſes from *character*, the other from *incident*. The firſt is attached and appropriated to the perſon, and makes a part, as it were, of his compoſition. The other is merely accidental, proceeding from awkward ſituations, odd and uncommon circumſtances, and the like, which may happen indifferently to every perſon. If we compare theſe with regard to their dignity and utility, we ſhall find a further difference; ſince that proceeding from *character* belongs to a very reſpectable part of knowledge, that of human manners; and has for its end

the correction of foibles: whereas that proceeding from *incident* is mean and trivial in its origin, and anſwers no other purpoſe than preſent mirth. 'Tis true, it is perfectly natural to be pleaſed with riſible objects, even of the loweſt kind, and a faſtidious averſion to their exhibition may be accounted mere affected nicety; yet, ſince we rank Comedy among the higher and more refined ſpecies of compoſition, let us aſſign it the more honourable office of exhibiting and correcting the ludicrous part of *characters*; and leave to Bartholomew Fair the ingenious contrivances of facetious drollery, and handicraft merriment.

THE following ſources may be pointed out from whence comic character is derived.

NATIONS, like individuals, have certain leading features which diſtinguiſh them

them from others. Of theſe there are always ſome of a ludicrous caſt which afford matter of entertainment to their neighbours. Comedy has at all times made very free with national peculiarities; and, although the ridicule has often been conducted in a trivial and illiberal manner, by greatly overcharging the picture, and introducing idle and unjuſt accuſations, yet I think we need not go ſo far as entirely to reject this ſort of ludicrous painting; ſince it may be as important to warn againſt the imitation of foreign follies, as thoſe of our own growth. Indeed, when a Frenchman or Iriſhman is brought upon our ſtage merely to talk broken Engliſh, or make bulls, there can be no plea either of wit or utility to excuſe the illiberal jeſt: but, when the nicer diſtinctions of national character are expoſed with a juſt and delicate ridicule, the ſpectacle may be both

entertaining and inſtructive. Amidſt the tribe of foreign valets to be met with on the Engliſh theatre, I would inſtance CANTON in the *Clandeſtine Marriage*, as an admirable example of true national character, independent on language and grimace. The obſequiouſneſs and attentive flattery of the ſervile Swiſs-Frenchman are quite characteriſtic; as well as the careleſs inſolence and affected airs of BRUSH the Engliſh footman *. O'FLA-

* I AM concerned to obſerve an inſtance of illiberal national ridicule without any merit of compoſition to palliate it, from a reſpectable dramatic writer, which is alſo rendered much more obnoxious by the circumſtances. M. Voltaire's *Ecoſſaiſe* was purpoſely written to exhibit a worthy Engliſh character; marked, indeed, with ſome whimſical peculiarities, but diſtinguiſhed by a ſtrong ſpirit of benevolence. It was impoſſible to expoſe national foibles more gently than by combining them with national virtues. When this Piece was brought on our ſtage under the title of the *Engliſh Merchant*, a French valet was inſerted among the *perſonæ dramatis*, characteriſed by nothing but his falſe Engliſh, and for no other end but to be exhibited as a ſcoundrel!

HERTY,

HERTY, the Iriſh ſoldier of fortune in the *Weſt Indian*, is an example of ſimilar merit; much more ſo, I think, than the character from which the piece has its title.

ALTHOUGH ſome part of the character of a nation is pretty uniform and conſtant, yet its manners and cuſtoms in many points are extremely variable. Theſe variations are the peculiar modes and faſhions of the age; and hence the age, as well as the nation, acquires a diſtinguiſhing character. Faſhion, in general, uſurps a dominion only over the ſmaller and leſs important part of manners; ſuch as dreſs, public diverſions, and other matters of taſte. The improprieties of faſhion are therefore of the abſurd and ludicrous kind, and conſequently fit ſubjects of comic ridicule. There is no ſource of Comedy more fertile and pleaſing than this; and

and none in which the end of reformation is likely to be ſo well anſwered. An extravagant faſhion is exhibited upon the ſtage with ſuch advantage of ridicule, that it can ſcarcely ſtand long againſt it; and I make no doubt that Moliere's *Marquis de Maſcarille*, and Cibber's *Lord Foppington*, had a conſiderable ſhare in reforming the prevailing foppery of the times. Faſhion has alſo too much interfered in ſome more ſerious matters, as the ſentiments and ſtudies of the age. Here too Comedy has made its attacks; and the *Alchemiſt*, the *Virtuoſo*, the *Antiquary*, the *Belle Eſprit*, have in their turns undergone the ridicule of the ſtage, when their reſpective purſuits, by being faſhionable, were carried to a fanciful extravagance. It is well known that Moliere, in his comedies of the *Femmes Sçavantes*, and the *Precieuſes Ridicules*, was as ſucceſsful againſt the pedantry and pretenſions to wit which infected

fected the French nation, and particularly the ladies, at that period, as Cervantes in his attack upon knight-errantry.

THERE is another point of national or fashionable folly in which Comedy might be very useful; yet the attempt has been found dangerous; and perhaps the subject is too delicate for the stage, considering the abuses to which it is liable. I mean popular superstition, and priestcraft. Moliere, who with impunity had attacked every other species of folly, was almost ruined by exposing a hypocrite and a devotee; and the licentious ridicule of Dryden, and others of that age, was generally aimed, not only against superstition, but religion. The *Spanish Friar*, however, is an instance in which, with exquisite humour, the ridicule can hardly be blamed as improper; and it certainly did more hurt to Roman Catholic superstition than

he

he could ever remedy by his ſcholaſtic *Hind and Panther*. How far the *Minor* comes under the ſame deſcription, would, probably, be a ſubject of diſpute.

PARTICULAR ranks and profeſſions of men have likewiſe characteriſtical peculiarities which are capable of being placed in a ludicrous view; and Comedy has made frequent uſe of this ſource of ridicule. In expoſing profeſſional, as well as national abſurdities, great illiberality and unfairneſs have been ſhewn; both, probably, from the ſame cauſe; a want of ſufficient acquaintance with the whole characters, and taking a judgment of them from a few external circumſtances. Yet, upon the whole, good effects may have ariſen even from this branch of Comedy; ſince, by attacking a profeſſion on a ſide where it was really weak, the members of it have been made ſenſible of,

and

and have reformed thoſe circumſtances which rendered them ridiculous. A good-natured phyſician can never be angry at Moliere's moſt laughable exhibitions of the faculty, when he reflects that the follies ridiculed, though exaggerated in the repreſentation, had a real exiſtence; and, by being held up to public deriſion, have been in a great meaſure reformed. The profeſſors of law, being neceſſarily confined to forms and rules, have not been able to benefit ſo much from the comic ridicule of which they have enjoyed an equally plentiful ſhare.

Besides the arrangements which nation and profeſſion make of mankind, there are certain natural claſſes formed from the diverſities of perſonal character. Although the varieties of temper and diſpoſition in men are infinite, ſo that no two perſons probably ever exiſted in whom there

there was an exact conformity, yet there are certain leading features of character which produce a general reſemblance among numerous individuals. Thus the proud man, the vain, the ſanguine, the ſplenetic, the ſuſpicious, the covetous, the laviſh, and ſo forth, are a ſort of abſtract characters which divide the whole human race amongſt them. Now there are, belonging to all theſe, objects of ridicule which it has been the buſineſs of Comedy to exhibit; and though, perhaps, no one individual of each claſs perfectly reſembled the perſon held to view on the ſtage, yet if all the circumſtances exhibited are contained in the general character, it appears ſufficiently natural. The *Miſer* of Moliere is not a picture of any one miſer who ever lived, but of a miſer conſidered as forming a claſs of human characters. As theſe general claſſes, however, are few in number, they muſt be ſoon exhauſted by

by the writers of Comedy, who have been obliged, for the ſake of variety, to exhibit thoſe peculiarities which are more rare and ſingular. Hence have been derived many pictures of that character which we call an *humouriſt*; by which is meant a character diſtinguiſhed by certain ludicrous ſingularities from the reſt of mankind. The humouriſt is not without thoſe marks of diſtinction which he may acquire, like others, from rank, profeſſion, or temper of mind; but all theſe are diſplayed in him after a manner peculiarly his own, and daſhed with his leading oddities. A love of what is uncommon and out of the way has often occaſioned ſuch extravagance in the repreſentation of theſe characters as to diſguſt from their want of probability; but, where a due moderation is obſerved, and the peculiarities, though unuſual, are ſuch as really exiſt in nature, great entertainment

tainment may be derived from their exhibition. Of this kind are the admirable *Miſanthrope* and *Malade Imaginaire* of Moliere; and the *Old Bachelor* and *Sir Sampſon Legend* of Congreve.

FROM hence it appears but a ſmall gradation to the exhibition of individuals upon the ſtage; and yet the difference is important and eſſential. That which marks out the diſtinction between individuals of the ſame ſpecies is ſomething entirely uncommunicable; therefore the rational end of Comedy, which is the reformation of folly, cannot take place in perſonal ridicule; for it will not be alledged that reforming the perſon himſelf is the object. Nor can it ſcarcely ever be juſt to expoſe an individual to the ridicule of the ſtage; ſince folly, and not vice, being the proper ſubject of that ridicule, it is hardly poſſible any one can deſerve

deſerve ſo ſevere a puniſhment. Indeed the expoſing of folly can ſcarcely be the plea; for all the common, or even the rarer kinds of folly lie open to the attack of Comedy under fictitious characters, by means of which the failing may be ridiculed without the perſon. Perſonal ridicule muſt therefore turn, as we find it always has done, upon bodily imperfections, awkward habits, and uncouth geſtures; which the low arts of mimickry inhumanly drag forth to public view, for the mean purpoſe of exciting preſent merriment. In the beſt hands, perſonal Comedy would be a degradation of the ſtage, and an unwarrantable ſeverity; but in the hands it would be likely, if encouraged, to fall into, it would prove an intolerable nuiſance. I ſhould therefore, without heſitation, join thoſe who utterly condemn this ſpecies of comic ridicule. It is alſo to be conſidered, that the author

ſhews his talents to diſadvantage, and cannot lay any baſis of future fame, in this walk. For the reſemblance which depends ſo much upon mimickry is loſt upon thoſe of the audience who are not acquainted with the original, and upon every one who only reads the piece. Mr. Foote's works will aptly exemplify this matter; in which the fund of genuine Comedy, derived from happy ſtrokes upon the manners of the times, and uncommon, but not entirely ſingular characters, will ſecure a laſting admiration, when the mimickry which ſupported the parts of *Squintum* and *Cadwallader* is deſpiſed or forgotten.

HAVING thus attempted to trace the different ſources of what I conceive the eſſential part of true Comedy, the *ridicule derived from character*, it remains to ſay ſomewhat of the mixture of additional

ditional matter which it has received as a compoſition.

DURING a conſiderable period of modern literature, *wit* was a commodity in great requeſt, and frequently to be met with in all kinds of compoſition. It was no where more abundant than in Comedy, the genius of which it appeared peculiarly to ſuit, from its gaiety and ſatyrical ſmartneſs. Accordingly, the language of Comedy was a ſtring of repartees, in which a thought was bandied about from one to another, till it was quite run out of breath. This made a ſcene paſs off with great vivacity; but the misfortune was, that diſtinction of character was quite loſt in the conteſt. Every perſonage, from the lord to the valet, was as witty as the author himſelf; and, provided good things enow were ſaid, it was no matter from whom they

came. Congreve, with the greateſt talents for true comic humour, and the delineation of ludicrous characters, was ſo overrun with a fondneſs for brilliancy, as frequently to break in upon conſiſtency. Wit is an admirable ornament of Comedy, and, judiciouſly applied, is a high relief to humour, but ſhould never interfere with the more eſſential parts.

We are now, however, happily free from all manner of danger of an inundation of wit. No Congreve ariſes to diſturb the ſententious gravity, and calm ſimplicity of modern Comedy. A moraliſt may congratulate the age on hearing from the theatre compoſitions as pure, ſerious and delicate, as are given from the pulpit. When we conſider how much wit and humour, at the time they were moſt prevalent, were perverted to vicious purpoſes, we may rejoice at the ſacrifice; yet we

we may be allowed to feel a regret at the loſs of an amuſement which might, certainly, have been reconciled with innocence; nay, might perhaps have pleaded utility beyond what is ſubſtituted in its room. *Sentimental Comedy*, as it is called, contains but very faint diſcrimination of character, and ſcarcely any thing of ridicule. Its principal aim is to introduce elegant and refined ſentiment, particularly of the benevolent caſt; and to move the heart by tender and intereſting ſituations. Hence they are, in general, much more affecting than our modern Tragedies, which are formed upon nearly the ſame plan, but labour under the diſadvantage of a formal, ſtately ſtile, and manners removed too far from the rank of common life. One would not, perhaps, wiſh altogether to baniſh from the ſtage pieces ſo moral and innocent; yet it is a pity they are not diſtinguiſhed by ſome appro-

priated name from a thing they ſo little reſemble as true Comedy.

I FEAR, a view of modern manners in other reſpects will ſcarcely allow us to flatter ourſelves that this change in the theatre chiefly proceeds from improved morality. It may, perhaps, be more juſtly attributed to a falſe delicacy of taſte, which renders us unable to bear the repreſentation of low life; and to a real deficiency in genius. With reſpect to the firſt, genuine Comedy knows no diſtinction of rank, but can as heartily enjoy a humourous picture in the common walks of life, where indeed the greateſt variety is to be found, as in the moſt cultivated and refined. Some have placed the diſtinction between Farce and Comedy in the rank from whence the characters are taken; but, I think, very improperly. If there is any real diſtinction beſides the length

length of the pieces, I ſhould take it from the different ſource of the humour; which in Farce is mere ludicrous incident, but in Comedy, ridiculous character. This criterion, however, will not at all agree with the titles under which each ſpecies has already appeared.

As to the other cauſe, deficiency of genius, it too plainly appears in many other productions. Cold correctneſs has laid her repreſſing hand upon imagination, and damped all her powers. The example of the ancients has been thought to juſtify the gravity and ſimplicity of modern Comedy. But, great as they were in many qualities of the mind, in thoſe of wit and humour they were ſtill more defective than even ourſelves in the preſent age. They, who would eagerly catch at a wretched pun, or a meager piece of plot, were certainly with-held from witti-

ciſm and drollery by want of invention, not juſtneſs of taſte. I admire, in the pure Latin of Terence, the elegant ſentiment, and ſtill more the knowledge of the human heart, with which he abounds; but I would not on that account compare his genius, at leaſt in Comedy, with Moliere and Congreve.

> Lenibus atque utinam ſcriptis adjuncta foret vis Comica ———————————

Moral ſentiment is the cheapeſt product of the mind. Novels, and magazines, and even news-papers, are full of it; but wit and humour threaten to leave us with Cheſterfield and Sterne.

STILL, however, I would hope the ſtate of Comedy is not deſperate. The *Clandeſtine Marriage* exhibits an example of comic merit, as various and perfect as perhaps any piece in our language. All the ſources of ludicrous character have con-

contributed to it. National ridicule appears in Canton, and profeſſional in Sterling. Lord Ogleby is an excellent humouriſt. Mrs. Heidleberg and her niece, beſides a comic pettiſhneſs of temper, have plenty of faſhionable follies, modified by city vulgariſm. Even the lovers of tender ſentiment have their ſhare in the entertainment; and I by no means would object to its occaſional introduction, when, as it were, offering itſelf from the circumſtances. Then, beſides Mr. Foote's comic theatre, we have ſeveral pieces, which, though ranged under the liſt of Farces, contain true and original Comedy. Of theſe we may inſtance the *Citizen*, *Polly Honeycomb*, *the Upholſterer*, *the Apprentice*, and *the Oxonian in Town*. It is a miſtake to ſuppoſe that the matter of Comedy can ever fail. Though general characters may be exhauſted, yet the prevailing follies and

faſhions

faſhions of the times, with the ſingularities ſtarting up in particular ranks and orders of men, muſt conſtantly ſupply food for the ridicule of the ſtage. This is lawful game; and the purſuit of it is well worthy the encouragement of the public, ſo long as it is unattended with the licentiouſneſs which diſgraced the wit of the laſt age. Let ridicule be ſacred to the intereſts of good ſenſe and virtue; let it never make a good character leſs reſpectable, nor a bad one leſs obnoxious; but let us not reſign its uſe to common-place maxim, and inſipid ſentiment.

THE

THE

HILL OF SCIENCE,

A VISION.

IN that ſeaſon of the year when the ſerenity of the ſky, the various fruits which cover the ground, the diſcoloured foliage of the trees, and all the ſweet, but fading graces of inſpiring autumn, open the mind to benevolence, and diſpoſe it for contemplation; I was wandering in a beautiful and romantic country, till curioſity began to give way to wearineſs; and I ſat me down on the fragment of a rock overgrown with moſs, where

the ruſtling of the falling leaves, the daſhing of waters, and the hum of the diſtant city, ſoothed my mind into the moſt perfect tranquillity, and ſleep inſenſibly ſtole upon me, as I was indulging the agreeable reveries which the objects around me naturally inſpired.

I IMMEDIATELY found myſelf in a vaſt extended plain, in the middle of which aroſe a mountain higher than I had before any conception of. It was covered with a multitude of people, chiefly youth; many of whom preſſed forwards with the livelieſt expreſſion of ardour in their countenance, though the way was in many places ſteep and difficult. I obſerved, that thoſe who had but juſt begun to climb the hill, thought themſelves not far from the top; but as they proceeded, new hills were continually riſing to their view; and the ſummit of the higheſt

higheſt they could before diſcern, ſeemed but the foot of another, till the mountain at length appeared to loſe itſelf in the clouds. As I was gazing on theſe things with aſtoniſhment, my good Genius ſuddenly appeared. 'The mountain before thee,' ſaid he, 'is the HILL OF SCIENCE. On the top is the temple of Truth, whoſe head is above the clouds, and whoſe face is covered with a veil of pure light. Obſerve the progreſs of her votaries; be ſilent, and attentive.'

I SAW that the only regular approach to the mountain was by a gate, called the gate of languages. It was kept by a woman of a penſive and thoughtful appearance, whoſe lips were continually moving, as though ſhe repeated ſomething to herſelf. Her name was MEMORY. On entering this firſt encloſure, I was ſtunned with a confuſed murmur of jarring voices, and diſſonant ſounds; which increaſed

creaſed upon me to ſuch a degree, that I was utterly confounded, and could compare the noiſe to nothing but the confuſion of tongues at Babel. The road was alſo rough and ſtony, and rendered more difficult by heaps of rubbiſh, continually tumbled down from the higher parts of the mountain; and by broken ruins of ancient buildings, which the travellers were obliged to climb over at every ſtep; inſomuch that many, diſguſted with ſo rough a beginning, turned back, and attempted the mountain no more: while others, having conquered this difficulty, had no ſpirits to aſcend further, and ſitting down on ſome fragment of the rubbiſh, harangued the multitude below with the greateſt marks of importance and ſelf-complacency.

About half way up the hill, I obſerved on each ſide the path a thick foreſt covered with continual fogs, and cut out into

into labyrinths, croſs alleys, and ſerpentine walks, entangled with thorns and briars. This was called the *wood of error*: and I heard the voices of many who were loſt up and down in it, calling to one another, and endeavouring in vain to extricate themſelves. The trees in many places ſhot their boughs over the path, and a thick miſt often reſted on it; yet never ſo much but that it was diſcernable by the light which beamed from the countenance of Truth.

In the pleaſanteſt part of the mountain were placed the bowers of the Muſes, whoſe office it was to cheer the ſpirits of the travellers, and encourage their fainting ſteps with ſongs from their divine harps. Not far from hence were the *fields of fiction*, filled with a variety of wild flowers ſpringing up in the greateſt luxuriance, of richer ſcents and brighter colours

colours than I had obſerved in any other climate. And near them was the *dark walk of allegory*, ſo artificially ſhaded, that the light at noon-day was never ſtronger than that of a bright moon-ſhine. This gave it a pleaſingly romantic air for thoſe who delighted in contemplation. The paths and alleys were perplexed with intricate windings, and were all terminated with the ſtatue of a Grace, a Virtue, or a Muſe.

AFTER I had obſerved theſe things, I turned my eyes towards the multitudes who were climbing the ſteep aſcent, and obſerved amongſt them a youth of a lively look, a piercing eye, and ſomething fiery and irregular in all his motions. His name was GENIUS. He darted like an eagle up the mountain, and left his companions gazing after him with envy and admiration: but his progreſs was unequal,

and

and interrupted by a thouſand caprices. When Pleaſure warbled in the valley, he mingled in her train. When Pride beckoned towards the precipice, he ventured to the tottering edge. He delighted in devious and untried paths; and made ſo many excurſions from the road, that his feebler companions often outſtripped him. I obſerved that the Muſes beheld him with partiality; but Truth often frowned and turned aſide her face. While Genius was thus waſting his ſtrength in eccentric flights, I ſaw a perſon of a very different appearance, named APPLICATION. He crept along with a ſlow and unremitting pace, his eyes fixed on the top of the mountain, patiently removing every ſtone that obſtructed his way, till he ſaw moſt of thoſe below him who had at firſt derided his ſlow and toilſome progreſs. Indeed there were few who aſcended the hill with equal and uninterrupted ſteadineſs; for, beſide the difficulties of the way, they

were continually ſolicited to turn aſide by a numerous crowd of Appetites, Paſſions, and Pleaſures, whoſe importunity, when they had once complied with, they became leſs and leſs able to reſiſt; and, though they often returned to the path, the aſperities of the road were more ſeverely felt, the hill appeared more ſteep and rugged, the fruits which were wholeſome and refreſhing, ſeemed harſh and ill-taſted, their ſight grew dim, and their feet tript at every little obſtruction.

I SAW, with ſome ſurprize, that the Muſes, whoſe buſineſs was to cheer and encourage thoſe who were toiling up the aſcent, would often ſing in the bowers of Pleaſure, and accompany thoſe who were enticed away at the call of the Paſſions. They accompanied them, however, but a little way, and always forſook them when they loſt ſight of the hill. Their tyrants then doubled their chains upon

the unhappy captives, and led them away without reſiſtance to the cells of Ignorance, or the manſions of Miſery. Amongſt the innumerable ſeducers, who were endeavouring to draw away the votaries of Truth from the path of Science, there was one ſo little formidable in her appearance, and ſo gentle and languid in her attempts, that I ſhould ſcarcely have taken notice of her, but for the numbers ſhe had imperceptibly loaded with her chains. INDOLENCE (for ſo ſhe was called), far from proceeding to open hoſtilities, did not attempt to turn their feet out of the path, but contented herſelf with retarding their progreſs; and the purpoſe ſhe could not force them to abandon, ſhe perſuaded them to delay. Her touch had a power like that of the Torpedo, which withered the ſtrength of thoſe who came within its influence. Her unhappy captives ſtill turned their faces towards the temple, and always

hoped to arrive there; but the ground ſeemed to ſlide from beneath their feet, and they found themſelves at the bottom before they ſuſpected that they had changed their place. The placid ſerenity which at firſt appeared in their countenance, changed by degrees into a melancholy languor, which was tinged with deeper and deeper gloom as they glided down the *ſtream of inſignificance*; a dark and ſluggiſh water, which is curled by no breeze, and enlivened by no murmur, till it falls into a dead ſea, where the ſtartled paſſengers are awakened by the ſhock, and the next moment buried in the gulph of oblivion.

Of all the unhappy deſerters from the paths of Science, none ſeemed leſs able to return than the followers of Indolence. The captives of Appetite and Paſſion could often ſeize the moment when their tyrants were languid or aſleep to eſcape from

from their enchantment; but the dominion of Indolence was conſtant and unremitted, and ſeldom reſiſted till reſiſtance was in vain.

AFTER contemplating theſe things, I turned my eyes towards the top of the mountain, where the air was always pure and exhilarating, the path ſhaded with laurels and other ever-greens, and the effulgence which beamed from the face of the Goddeſs ſeemed to ſhed a glory round her votaries. Happy, ſaid I, are they who are permitted to aſcend the mountain!—but while I was pronouncing this exclamation with uncommon ardour, I ſaw ſtanding beſide me a form of diviner features and a more benign radiance. Happier, ſaid ſhe, are thoſe whom VIRTUE conducts to the manſions of Content! — What, ſaid I, does Virtue then reſide in the vale?— I am found, ſaid ſhe, in the vale, and

I illuminate the mountain. I cheer the cottager at his toil, and inſpire the ſage at his meditation. I mingle in the crowd of cities, and bleſs the hermit in his cell. I have a temple in every heart that owns my influence; and to him that wiſhes for me I am already preſent. Science may raiſe you to eminence, but I alone can guide you to felicity! While the Goddeſs was thus ſpeaking, I ſtretched out my arms towards her with a vehemence which broke my ſlumbers. The chill dews were falling around me, and the ſhades of evening ſtretched over the landſcape. I haſtened homeward, and reſigned the night to ſilence and meditation.

ON

ROMANCES,

AN IMITATION.

OF all the multifarious productions which the efforts of ſuperior genius, or the labours of ſcholaſtic induſtry, have crowded upon the world, none are peruſed with more inſatiable avidity, or diſſeminated with more univerſal applauſe, than the narrations of feigned events, deſcriptions of imaginary ſcenes, and delineations of ideal characters. The celebrity of other authors is confined

within very narrow limits. The Geometrician and Divine, the Antiquary and the Critic, however diſtinguiſhed by unconteſted excellence, can only hope to pleaſe thoſe whom a conformity of diſpoſition has engaged in ſimilar purſuits; and muſt be content to be regarded by the reſt of the world with the ſmile of frigid indifference, or the contemptuous ſneer of ſelf-ſufficient folly. The collector of ſhells and the anatomiſt of inſects is little inclined to enter into theological diſputes: the Divine is not apt to regard with veneration the uncouth diagrams and tedious calculations of the Aſtronomer: the man whoſe life has been conſumed in adjuſting the diſputes of lexicographers, or elucidating the learning of antiquity, cannot eaſily bend his thoughts to recent tranſactions, or readily intereſt himſelf in the unimportant hiſtory of his contemporaries: and the Cit,

Cit, who knows no buſineſs but acquiring wealth, and no pleaſure but diſplaying it, has a heart equally ſhut up to argument and fancy, to the batteries of ſyllogiſm, and the arrows of wit. To the writer of fiction alone, every ear is open, and every tongue laviſh of applauſe; curioſity ſparkles in every eye, and every boſom is throbbing with concern.

It is, however, eaſy to account for this enchantment. To follow the chain of perplexed ratiocination, to view with critical ſkill the airy architecture of ſyſtems, to unravel the web of ſophiſtry, or weigh the merits of oppoſite hypotheſes, requires perſpicacity, and preſuppoſes learning. Works of this kind, therefore, are not ſo well adapted to the generality of readers as familiar and colloquial compoſition; for few can reaſon, but all can feel; and many who cannot

cannot enter into an argument, may yet liſten to a tale. The writer of Romance has even an advantage over thoſe who endeavour to amuſe by the play of fancy; who, from the fortuitous colliſon of diſſimilar ideas produce the ſcintillations of wit; or by the vivid glow of poetical imagery delight the imagination with colours of ideal radiance. The attraction of the magnet is only exerted upon ſimilar particles; and to taſte the beauties of Homer, it is requiſite to partake his fire; but every one can reliſh the author who repreſents common life, becauſe every one can refer to the originals from whence his ideas were taken. He relates events to which all are liable, and applies to paſſions which all have felt. The gloom of ſolitude, the languor of inaction, the corroſions of diſappointment, and the toil of thought, induce men to ſtep aſide from the rugged road of life, and

and wander in the fairy land of fiction; where every bank is ſprinkled with flowers, and every gale loaded with perfume; where every event introduces a hero, and every cottage is inhabited by a Grace. Invited by theſe flattering ſcenes, the ſtudent quits the inveſtigation of truth, in which he perhaps meets with no leſs fallacy, to exhilarate his mind with new ideas, more agreeable, and more eaſily attained: the buſy relax their attention by deſultory reading, and ſmooth the agitation of a ruffled mind with images of peace, tranquillity, and pleaſure: the idle and the gay relieve the liſtleſſneſs of leiſure, and diverſify the round of life by a rapid ſeries of events pregnant with rapture and aſtoniſhment; and the penſive ſolitary fills up the vacuities of his heart by intereſting himſelf in the fortunes of imaginary beings, and forming connections with ideal excellence.

It is, indeed, no ways extraordinary that the mind ſhould be charmed by fancy, and attracted by pleaſure; but that we ſhould liſten with complacence to the groans of miſery, and delight to view the exacerbations of complicated anguiſh, that we ſhould chooſe to chill the boſom with imaginary fears, and dim the eyes with fictitious ſorrow, ſeems a kind of paradox of the heart, and can only be credited becauſe it is univerſally felt. Various are the hypotheſes which have been formed to account for the diſpoſition of the mind to riot in this ſpecies of intellectual luxury. Some have imagined that we are induced to acquieſce with greater patience in our own lot, by beholding pictures of life, tinged with deeper horrors, and loaded with more excruciating calamities; as, to a perſon ſuddenly emerging out of a dark room, the fainteſt glimmering of twilight aſſumes a luſtre from the contraſted

contraſted gloom. Others, with yet deeper refinement, ſuppoſe that we take upon ourſelves this burden of adſcititious ſorrows, in order to feaſt upon the conſciouſneſs of our own virtue. We commiſerate others, ſay they, that we may applaud ourſelves; and the ſigh of compaſſionate ſympathy is always followed by the gratulations of ſelf-complacent eſteem. But ſurely they who would thus reduce the ſympathetic emotions of pity to a ſyſtem of refined ſelfiſhneſs, have but ill attended to the genuine feelings of humanity. It would, however, exceed the limits of this paper, ſhould I attempt an accurate inveſtigation of theſe ſentiments. But, let it be remembered, that we are more attracted by thoſe ſcenes which intereſt our paſſions, or gratify our curioſity, than thoſe which delight our fancy: and, ſo far from being indifferent to the miſeries of others, we are, at the

time, totally regardleſs of our own. And let not thoſe on whom the hand of Time has impreſſed the characters of oracular wiſdom, cenſure with too much acrimony productions which are thus calculated to pleaſe the imagination, and intereſt the heart. They teach us to think, by inuring us to feel: they ventilate the mind by ſudden guſts of paſſion; and prevent the ſtagnation of thought, by a freſh infuſion of diſſimilar ideas.

SELÁMA;

SELÁMA;

AN

IMITATION OF OSSIAN.

WHAT ſoft voice of ſorrow is in the breeze? what lovely ſunbeam of beauty trembling on the rock? Its bright hair is bathed in ſhowers; and it looks faint and dim, through its miſt on the ruſhy plain. Why art thou alone maid of the mournful look? The cold dropping rain is on the rocks of Torléna—

léna, the blaſt of the deſart lifts thy yellow locks. Let thy ſteps be in the hall of ſhells, by the blue winding ſtream of Clutha: let the harp tremble beneath thy fingers; and the ſons of heroes liſten to the muſic of ſongs.

SHALL my ſteps be in the hall of ſhells, and the aged low in the duſt? The father of Seláma is low behind this rock, on his bed of wither'd leaves: the thiſtle's down is ſtrewed over him by the wind, and mixes with his grey hair. Thou art fallen, chief of Etha! without thy fame; and there is none to revenge thy death. But thy daughter will ſit, pale, beſide thee, till ſhe ſinks, a faded flower, upon thy lifeleſs form. Leave the maid of Clutha, ſon of the ſtranger! in the red eye of her tears!

How fell the car-borne Connal, blue-eyed mourner of the rock? Mine arm is

is not weakened in battle; nor my ſword without its fame.

CONNAL was a fire in his youth, that lighten'd through fields of renown: but the flame weakly glimmered through grey aſhes of age. His courſe was like a ſtar moving through the heavens: it walketh in brightneſs, but leaveth no track behind; its ſilver path cannot be found in the ſky. The ſtrength of Etha is rolled away like a tale of other years; and his eyes have failed. Feeble and dark, he ſits in his hall, and hears the diſtant tread of a ſtranger's ſteps; the haughty ſteps of Tonthormo, from the roar of Duvranno's echoing ſtream. He ſtood in the hall like a pillar of darkneſs, on whoſe top is the red beam of fire: wide rolled his eyes beneath the gloomy arch of his bent brow; as flames in two caves of a rock, over-hung with the black pine of the de-

ſart. They had rolled on Seláma, and he aſked the daughter of Connal. Tonthormo! breaker of ſhields! thou art a meteor of death in war, whoſe fiery hair ſtreams on the clouds, and the nations are withered beneath its path. Dwell, Tonthormo! amidſt thy hundred hills, and liſten to thy torrent's roar; but the ſoft ſigh of the virgins is with the chief of Crono; Hidallan is the dream of Seláma, the dweller of her ſecret thoughts. A ruſhing ſtorm in war, a breeze that ſighs over the fallen foe; pleaſant are thy words of peace, and thy ſongs at the moſſy brook. Thy ſmiles are like the moon-beams trembling on the waves. Thy voice is the gale of ſummer that whiſpers among the reeds of the lake, and awakens the harp of Moilena with all its lightly-trembling ſtrings. Oh that thy calm light was around me! my ſoul ſhould not fear the gloomy chief of Duv-

ranno. He came with his ſtately ſteps.— My ſhield is before thee, maid of my love! a wall of ſhelter from the lightning of ſwords. They fought. Tonthormo bends in all his pride, before the arm of youth. But a voice was in the breaſt of Hidallan, ſhall I ſlay the love of Seláma? Seláma dwells in thy dark boſom, ſhall my ſteel enter there? Live, thou ſtorm of war! He gave again his ſword. But, careleſs as he ſtrode away, rage aroſe in the troubled thoughts of the vanquiſh'd. He mark'd his time, and ſidelong pierced the heart of the generous ſon of Semo. His fair hair is ſpread on the duſt, his eyes are bent on the trembling beam of Clutha. Farewel, light of my ſoul! They are cloſed in darkneſs. Feeble waſt thou then, my father! and in vain didſt thou call for help. Thy grey locks are ſcatter'd, as a wreath of ſnow on the top of a wither'd trunk;

which the boy bruſhes away with his ſtaff; and careleſs ſingeth as he walks. Who ſhall defend thee, my daughter! ſaid the broken voice of Etha's chief. Fair flower of the deſart! the tempeſt ſhall ruſh over thee; and thou ſhalt be low beneath the foot of the ſavage ſon of prey. But I will wither, my father, on thy tomb. Weak and alone I dwell amidſt my tears, there is no young warrior to lift the ſpear, no brother of love! Oh that mine arm were ſtrong! I would ruſh amidſt the battle. Selàma has no friend!

But Selàma has a friend, ſaid the kindling ſoul of Reuthamir. I will fight thy battles, lovely daughter of kings; and the ſun of Duvranno ſhall ſet in blood. But when I return in peace, and the ſpirits of thy foes are on my ſword, meet me with thy ſmiles of love, maid of Clutha!

Clutha! with thy ſlow-rolling eyes. Let the ſoft ſound of thy ſteps be heard in my halls, that the mother of Reuthamir may rejoice. Whence, ſhe will ſay, is this beam of the diſtant land? Thou ſhalt dwell in her boſom.

My thoughts are with him who is low in the duſt, ſon of Cormac! But lift the ſpear, thou friend of the unhappy! the light of my ſoul may return.

He ſtrode in his rattling arms. Tall, in a gloomy foreſt, ſtood the ſurly ſtrength of Duvranno. Gleaming behind the dark trees was his broad ſhield; like the moon when it riſes in blood, and the duſky clouds ſail low, and heavy, athwart its path. Thoughts, like the troubled ocean, ruſh'd over his ſoul, and he ſtruck, with his ſpear, the ſounding pine. Starting, he mix'd in battle

with the chief of woody Morna. Long was the ſtrife of arms; and the giant ſons of the foreſt trembled at their ſtrokes. At length Tonthormo fell—The ſword of Reuthamir wav'd, a blue flame, around him. He bites the ground in rage. His blood is poured, a dark red ſtream, into Oithona's trembling waves. Joy brighten'd in the ſoul of Reuthamir; when a young warrior came, with his forward ſpear. He moved in the light of beauty; but his words were haughty and fierce. Is Tonthormo fallen in blood, the friend of my early years? Die, thou dark-ſoul'd chief! for never ſhall Seláma be thine, the maid of his love. Lovely ſhone her eyes, through tears, in the hall of her grief, when I ſtood by the chief of Duvranno, in the riſing ſtrife of Clutha.

RETIRE, thou ſwelling voice of pride!

thy

thy ſpear is light as the taper reed. Pierce the roes of the deſart; and call the hunter to the feaſt of ſongs, but ſpeak not of the daughter of Connal, ſon of the feeble arm! Seláma is the love of heroes.

TRY thy ſtrength with the feeble arm, ſaid the riſing pride of youth. Thou ſhalt vaniſh like a cloud of miſt before the ſun, when he looks abroad in the power of his brightneſs, and the ſtorms are rolled away from before his face.

BUT thou thyſelf didſt fall before Reuthamir, in all thy boaſting words. As a tall aſh of the mountain, when the tempeſt takes its green head and lays it level on the plain.

COME from thy ſecret cave, Seláma! thy foes are ſilent and dark. Thou dove that hideſt in the clefts of the rocks! the

ſtorm is over and paſt. Come from thy rock, Seláma! and give thy white hand to the chief who never fled from the face of glory, in all its terrible brightneſs.

She gave her hand, but it was trembling and cold, for the ſpear was deep in her ſide. Red, beneath her mail, the current of crimſon wandered down her white breaſt, as the track of blood on Cromla's mountains of ſnow, when the wounded deer ſlowly croſſes the heath, and the hunters cries are in the breeze. Bleſt be the ſpear of Reuthamir! ſaid the faint voice of the lovely, I feel it cold in my heart. Lay me by the ſon of Semo. Why ſhould I know another love? Raiſe the tomb of the aged, his thin form ſhall rejoice, as he ſails on a low-hung cloud, and guides the wintry ſtorm. Open your airy halls, ſpirits of my love!

AND have I quench'd the light which was pleaſant to my ſoul? ſaid the chief of Morna. My ſteps moved in darkneſs, why were the words of ſtrife in thy tale? Sorrow, like a cloud, comes over my ſoul, and ſhades the joy of mighty deeds. Soft be your reſt in the narrow houſe, children of grief! The breeze in the long whiſtling graſs ſhall not awaken you. The tempeſt ſhall ruſh over you, and the bulruſh bow its head upon your tomb, but ſilence ſhall dwell in your habitation; long repoſe, and the peace of years to come. The voice of the bard ſhall raiſe your remembrance in the diſtant land, and mingle your tale of woe with the murmur of other ſtreams. Often ſhall the harp ſend forth a mournful ſound, and the tear dwell in the ſoft eyes of the daughters of Morna.

SUCH were the words of Reuthamir, while

while he raiſed the tombs of the fallen. Sad were his ſteps towards the towers of his fathers, as muſing he croſs'd the dark heath of Lena, and ſtruck, at times, the thiſtle's beard.

AGAINST

AGAINST INCONSISTENCY IN OUR EXPECTATIONS.

" WHAT is more reaſonable, than that
" they who take pains for any thing,
" ſhould get moſt in that particular
" for which they take pains? They
" have taken pains for power, you for
" right principles; they for riches, you
" for a proper uſe of the appearances
" of things: ſee whether they have the
" advantage of you in that for which
" you have taken pains, and which
" they neglect: If they are in power,
" and you not, why will not you ſpeak
" the

" the truth to yourſelf, that you do
" nothing for the ſake of power, but
" that they do every thing? No, but
" ſince I take care to have right prin-
" ciples, it is more reaſonable that I
" ſhould have power. Yes, in reſpect
" to what you take care about, your
" principles. But give up to others
" the things in which they have taken
" more care than you. Elſe it is juſt
" as if, becauſe you have right prin-
" ciples, you ſhould think it fit that
" when you ſhoot an arrow, you ſhould
" hit the mark better than an archer,
" or that you ſhould forge better than
" a ſmith."

CARTER's EPICTETUS.

As moſt of the unhappineſs in the world ariſes rather from diſappointed deſires, than from poſitive evil, it is of the utmoſt conſequence to attain juſt notions

notions of the laws and order of the univerſe, that we may not vex ourſelves with fruitleſs wiſhes, or give way to groundleſs and unreaſonable diſcontent. The laws of natural philoſophy, indeed, are tolerably underſtood and attended to; and though we may ſuffer inconveniences, we are ſeldom diſappointed in conſequence of them. No man expects to preſerve orange-trees in the open air through an Engliſh winter; or when he has planted an acorn, to ſee it become a large oak in a few months. The mind of man naturally yields to neceſſity; and our wiſhes ſoon ſubſide when we ſee the impoſſibility of their being gratified. Now, upon an accurate inſpection, we ſhall find, in the moral government of the world, and the order of the intellectual ſyſtem, laws as determinate fixed and invariable as any in Newton's Principia. The progreſs of vegetation is not more certain than the growth

of

of habit; nor is the power of attraction more clearly proved than the force of affection or the influence of example. The man therefore who has well ſtudied the operations of nature in mind as well as matter, will acquire a certain moderation and equity in his claims upon Providence. He never will be diſappointed either in himſelf or others. He will act with preciſion; and expect that effect and that alone from his efforts, which they are naturally adapted to produce. For want of this, men of merit and integrity often cenſure the diſpoſitions of Providence for ſuffering characters they deſpiſe to run away with advantages which, they yet know, are purchaſed by ſuch means as a high and noble ſpirit could never ſubmit to. If you refuſe to pay the price, why expect the purchaſe? We ſhould conſider this world as a great mart of commerce, where fortune expoſes to our view

view various commodities, riches, eaſe, tranquillity, fame, integrity, knowledge. Every thing is marked at a ſettled price. Our time, our labour, our ingenuity, is ſo much ready money which we are to lay out to the beſt advantage. Examine, compare, chooſe, reject; but ſtand to your own judgment; and do not, like children, when you have purchaſed one thing, repine that you do not poſſeſs another which you did not purchaſe. Such is the force of well-regulated induſtry, that a ſteady and vigorous exertion of our faculties, directed to one end, will generally inſure ſucceſs. Would you, for inſtance, be rich? Do you think that ſingle point worth the ſacrificing every thing elſe to? You may then be rich. Thouſands have become ſo from the loweſt beginnings by toil, and patient diligence, and attention to the minuteſt articles of expence and profit. But you muſt give

up

up the pleaſures of leiſure, of a vacant mind, of a free unſuſpicious temper. If you preſerve your integrity, it muſt be a coarſe-ſpun and vulgar honeſty. Thoſe high and lofty notions of morals which you brought with you from the ſchools muſt be conſiderably lowered, and mixed with the baſer alloy of a jealous and wordly-minded prudence. You muſt learn to do hard, if not unjuſt things; and for the nice embarraſſments of a delicate and ingenuous ſpirit, it is neceſſary for you to get rid of them as faſt as poſſible. You muſt ſhut your heart againſt the Muſes, and be content to feed your underſtanding with plain, houſhold truths. In ſhort, you muſt not attempt to enlarge your ideas, or poliſh your taſte, or refine you ſentiments; but muſt keep on in one beaten track, without turning aſide either to the right hand or to the left. "But I cannot ſubmit to drudgery like

this—I feel a ſpirit above it." 'Tis well: be above it then; only do not repine that you are not rich.

Is knowledge the pearl of peace? That too may be purchaſed—by ſteady application, and long ſolitary hours of ſtudy and reflection. Beſtow theſe, and you ſhall be wiſe. "But (ſays the man of letters) what a hardſhip is it that many an illiterate fellow who cannot conſtrue the motto of the arms on his coach, ſhall raiſe a fortune and make a figure, while I have little more than the common conveniences of life." *Et tibi magna ſatis!*—Was it in order to raiſe a fortune that you conſumed the ſprightly hours of youth in ſtudy and retirement? Was it to be rich that you grew pale over the midnight lamp, and diſtilled the ſweetneſs from the Greek and Roman ſpring? You have then miſtaken your path, and ill

employed your induſtry. "What reward have I then for all my labours?" What reward! A large comprehenſive ſoul, well purged from vulgar fears, and perturbations, and prejudices; able to comprehend and interpret the works of man —of God. A rich, flouriſhing, cultivated mind, pregnant with inexhauſtible ſtores of entertainment and reflection. A perpetual ſpring of freſh ideas; and the conſcious dignity of ſuperior intelligence. Good heaven! and what reward can you aſk beſides?

"But is it not ſome reproach upon the œconomy of Providence that ſuch a one, who is a mean dirty fellow, ſhould have amaſſed wealth enough to buy half a nation?" Not in the leaſt. He made himſelf a mean dirty fellow for that very end. He has paid his health, his conſcience, his liberty for it; and will you envy

vy him his bargain? Will you hang your head and bluſh in his preſence becauſe he outſhines you in equipage and ſhow? Lift up your brow with a noble confidence, and ſay to yourſelf, I have not theſe things, it is true; but it is becauſe I have not ſought, becauſe I have not deſired them; it is becauſe I poſſeſs ſomething better. I have choſen my lot. I am content and ſatisfied.

You are a modeſt man—You love quiet and independence, and have a delicacy and reſerve in your temper which renders it impoſſible for you to elbow your way in the world, and be the herald of your own merits. Be content then with a modeſt retirement, with the eſteem of your intimate friends, with the praiſes of a blameleſs heart, and a delicate ingenuous ſpirit; but reſign the ſplendid diſtinctions of the world to thoſe who can better ſcramble for them.

THE man whoſe tender ſenſibility of conſcience and ſtrict regard to the rules of morality makes him ſcrupulous and fearful of offending, is often heard to complain of the diſadvantages he lies under in every path of honour and profit. "Could I but get over ſome nice points, and conform to the practice and opinion of thoſe about me, I might ſtand as fair a chance as others for dignities and preferment." And why can you not? What hinders you from diſcarding this troubleſome ſcrupuloſity of yours which ſtands ſo grievouſly in your way? If it be a ſmall thing to enjoy a healthful mind, ſound at the very core, that does not ſhrink from the keeneſt inſpection; inward freedom from remorſe and perturbation; unſullied whiteneſs and ſimplicity of manners; a genuine integrity

Pure in the laſt receſſes of the mind;

if you think theſe advantages an inadequate

quate recompence for what you reſign, diſmiſs your ſcruples this inſtant, and be a ſlave-merchant, a paraſite, or—what you pleaſe.

If theſe be motives weak, break off betimes;

and as you have not ſpirit to aſſert the dignity of virtue, be wiſe enough not to forego the emoluments of vice.

I MUCH admire the ſpirit of the ancient philoſophers, in that they never attempted, as our moraliſts often do, to lower the tone of philoſophy, and make it conſiſtent with all the indulgences of indolence and ſenſuality. They never thought of having the bulk of mankind for their diſciples; but kept themſelves as diſtinct as poſſible from a worldly life. They plainly told men what ſacrifices were required, and what advantages they were which might be expected.

Si virtus hoc una poteſt dare, fortis omiſſis
Hoc age deliciis———————

If you would be a philoſopher theſe are the terms. You muſt do thus and thus: There is no other way. If not, go and be one of the vulgar.

THERE is no one quality gives ſo much dignity to a character as conſiſtency of conduct. Even if a man's purſuits be wrong and unjuſtifiable, yet if they are proſecuted with ſteadineſs and vigour, we cannot withhold our admiration. The moſt characteriſtic mark of a great mind is to chooſe ſome one important object, and purſue it through life. It was this made Cæſar a great man. His object was ambition; he purſued it ſteadily, and was always ready to ſacrifice to it every interfering paſſion or inclination.

THERE is a pretty paſſage in one of Lucian's dialogues, where Jupiter com-

plains to Cupid that though he has had ſo many intrigues, he was never ſincerely beloved. In order to be loved, ſays Cupid, you muſt lay aſide your ægis and your thunder-bolts, and you muſt curl and perfume your hair, and place a garland on your head, and walk with a ſoft ſtep, and aſſume a winning obſequious deportment. But, replied Jupiter, I am not willing to reſign ſo much of my dignity. Then, returns Cupid, leave off deſiring to be loved—He wanted to be Jupiter and Adonis at the ſame time.

It muſt be confeſſed, that men of genius are of all others moſt inclined to make theſe unreaſonable claims. As their reliſh for enjoyment is ſtrong, their views large and comprehenſive, and they feel themſelves lifted above the common bulk of mankind, they are apt to ſlight that natural reward of praiſe and admiration

which is ever largely paid to diſtinguiſhed abilties; and to expect to be called forth to public notice and favour: without conſidering that their talents are commonly very unfit for active life; that their eccentricity and turn for ſpeculation diſqualifies them for the buſineſs of the world, which is beſt carried on by men of moderate genius; and that ſociety is not obliged to reward any one who is not uſeful to it. The Poets have been a very unreaſonable race, and have often complained loudly of the neglect of genius and the ingratitude of the age. The tender and penſive Cowley, and the elegant Shenſtone, had their minds tinctured by this diſcontent; and even the ſublime melancholy of Young was too much owing to the ſtings of diſappointed ambition.

THE moderation we have been endeavouring

vouring to inculcate will likewiſe prevent much mortification and diſguſt in our commerce with mankind. As we ought not to wiſh in ourſelves, ſo neither ſhould we expect in our friends contrary qualifications. Young and ſanguine, when we enter the world, and feel our affections drawn forth by any particular excellence in a character, we immediately give it credit for all others; and are beyond meaſure diſguſted when we come to diſcover, as we ſoon muſt diſcover, the defects in the other ſide of the balance. But nature is much more frugal than to heap together all manner of ſhining qualities in one glaring maſs. Like a judicious painter ſhe endeavours to preſerve a certain unity of ſtile and colouring in her pieces. Models of abſolute perfection are only to be met with in romance; where exquiſite beauty and brilliant wit, and profound judgment, and immaculate virtue, are all blended

blended together to adorn ſome favourite character. As an anatomiſt knows that the racer cannot have the ſtrength and muſcles of the draught-horſe; and that winged men, gryffons, and mermaids muſt be mere creatures of the imagination; ſo the philoſopher is ſenſible that there are combinations of moral qualities which never can take place but in idea. There is a different air and complexion in characters as well as in faces, though perhaps each equally beautiful; and the excellencies of one cannot be transferred to the other. Thus if one man poſſeſſes a ſtoical apathy of ſoul, acts independent of the opinion of the world, and fulfils every duty with mathematical exactneſs, you muſt not expect that man to be greatly influenced by the weakneſs of pity, or the partialities of friendſhip: you muſt not be offended that he does not fly to meet you after a ſhort abſence;

or

or require from him the convivial ſpirit and honeſt effuſions of a warm, open, ſuſceptible heart. If another is remarkable for a lively active zeal, inflexible integrity, a ſtrong indignation againſt vice, and freedom in reproving it, he will probably have ſome little bluntneſs in his addreſs not altogether ſuitable to poliſhed life; he will want the winning arts of converſation; he will diſguſt by a kind of haughtineſs and negligence in his manner, and often hurt the delicacy of his acquaintance with harſh and diſagreeable truths.

We uſually ſay—that man is a genius, *but* he has ſome whims and oddities—ſuch a one has a very general knowledge, *but* he is ſuperficial; &c. Now in all ſuch caſes we ſhould ſpeak more rationally did we ſubſtitute *therefore* for *but*.

He

He is a genius, *therefore* he is whimſical; and the like.

It is the fault of the preſent age, owing to the freer commerce that different ranks and profeſſions now enjoy with each other, that characters are not marked with ſufficient ſtrength: the ſeveral claſſes run too much into one another. We have fewer pedants, it is true, but we have fewer ſtriking originals. Every one is expected to have ſuch a tincture of general knowledge as is incompatible with going deep into any ſcience; and ſuch a conformity to faſhionable manners as checks the free workings of the ruling paſſion, and gives an inſipid ſameneſs to the face of ſociety, under the idea of poliſh and regularity.

There is a caſt of manners peculiar and becoming to each age, ſex, and profeſſion;

ſeſſion; one, therefore, ſhould not throw out illiberal and common-place cenſures againſt another. Each is perfect in its kind. A woman as a woman: a tradeſman as a tradeſman. We are often hurt by the brutality and ſluggiſh conceptions of the vulgar; not conſidering that ſome there muſt be to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, and that cultivated genius, or even any great refinement and delicacy in their moral feelings, would be a real misfortune to them.

Let us then ſtudy the philoſophy of the human mind. The man who is maſter of this ſcience, will know what to expect from every one. From this man, wiſe advice; from that, cordial ſympathy; from another, caſual entertainment. The paſſions and inclinations of others are his tools, which he can uſe with

with as much preciſion as he would the mechanical powers; and he can as readily make allowance for the workings of vanity, or the bias of ſelf-intereſt in his friends, as for the power of friction, or the irregularities of the needle.

THE

THE

CANAL AND THE BROOK.

AN APOLOGUE.

A DELIGHTFULLY pleaſant evening ſucceeding a ſultry ſummer-day, invited me to take a ſolitary walk; and leaving the duſt of the highway, I fell into a path which led along a pleaſant little valley watered by a ſmall meandering brook. The meadow-ground on its banks had been lately mown, and the new graſs was

was ſpringing up with a lively verdure. The brook was hid in ſeveral places by ſhrubs that grew on each ſide, and intermingled their branches. The ſides of the valley were roughened by ſmall irregular thickets; and the whole ſcene had an air of ſolitude and retirement, uncommon in the neighbourhood of a populous town. The Duke of Bridgewater's canal croſſed the valley, high raiſed on a mound of earth, which preſerved a level with the elevated ground on each ſide. An arched road was carried under it, beneath which the brook that ran along the valley was conveyed by a ſubterraneous paſſage. I threw myſelf upon a green bank, ſhaded by a leafy thicket, and reſting my head upon my hand, after a welcome indolence had overcome my ſenſes, I ſaw, with the eyes of fancy, the following ſcene.

THE firm-built ſide of the aqueduct ſuddenly

ſuddenly opened, and a gigantic form iſſued forth, which I ſoon diſcovered to be the *Genius of the Canal.* He was clad in a cloſe garment of a ruſſet hue. A mural crown, indented with battlements, ſurrounded his brow. His naked feet were diſcoloured with clay. On his left ſhoulder he bore a huge pick-ax; and in his right hand he held certain inſtruments, uſed in ſurveying and levelling. His looks were thoughtful, and his features harſh. The breach through which he proceeded, inſtantly cloſed; and with a heavy tread he advanced into the valley. As he approached the brook, the *Deity of the Stream* aroſe to meet him. He was habited in a light green mantle, and the clear drops fell from his dark hair, which was encircled with a wreath of water lily, interwoven with ſweet ſcented flag. An angling rod ſupported his ſteps. The Genius of the Canal eyed him with a

contemptuous look, and in a hoarſe voice thus began:

" HENCE, ignoble rill! with thy ſcanty
" tribute to thy lord, the Merſey; nor
" thus waſte thy almoſt exhauſted urn in
" lingering windings along the vale.
" Feeble as thine aid is, it will not be
" unacceptable to that maſter ſtream
" himſelf; for, as I lately croſſed his
" channel, I perceived his ſands loaded
" with ſtranded veſſels. I ſaw, and pitied
" him, for undertaking a taſk to which
" he is unequal. But thou, whoſe languid
" current is obſcured by weeds, and in-
" terrupted by miſhapen pebbles; who
" loſeſt thyſelf in endleſs mazes, remote
" from any ſound, but thy own idle
" gurgling; how canſt thou ſupport an
" exiſtence ſo contemptible and uſeleſs?
" For me, the nobleſt child of art, who
" hold my unremitting courſe from hill

" to

" to hill, over vales and rivers; who
" pierce the ſolid rock for my paſſage,
" and connect unknown lands with
" diſtant ſeas; wherever I appear I am
" viewed with aſtoniſhment, and exulting
" commerce hails my waves. Behold
" my channel thronged with capacious
" veſſels for the conveyance of mer-
" chandiſe, and ſplendid barges for the
" uſe and pleaſure of travellers; my
" banks crowned with airy bridges and
" huge warehouſes, and echoing with
" the buſy ſounds of induſtry. Pay then
" the homage due from ſloth and ob-
" ſcurity to grandeur and utility."

" I READILY acknowledge," replied the Deity of the Brook, in a modeſt accent, " the ſuperior magnificence and
" more extenſive utility of which you ſo
" proudly boaſt; yet, in my humble walk,
" I am not void of a praiſe, leſs ſhining,

" but not leſs ſolid than yours. The
" nymph of this peaceful valley, ren-
" dered more fertile and beautiful by my
" ſtream; the neighbouring ſylvan deities,
" to whoſe pleaſure I contribute, will
" pay a grateful teſtimony to my merit.
" The windings of my courſe, which you
" ſo much blame, ſerve to diffuſe over a
" greater extent of ground the refreſh-
" ment of my waters; and the lovers of
" nature and the Muſes, who are fond of
" ſtraying on my banks, are better pleaſed
" that the line of beauty marks my way,
" than if, like yours, it were directed in a
" ſtraight, unvaried line. They prize the
" irregular wildneſs with which I am
" decked, as the charms of beauteous ſim-
" plicity. What you call the weeds which
" darken and obſcure my waves, afford
" to the botaniſt a pleaſing ſpeculation of
" the works of nature; and the poet and
" painter think the luſtre of my ſtream
" greatly

" greatly improved by glittering through
" them. The pebbles which diverſify
" my bottom, and make theſe ripplings
" in my current, are pleaſing objects to
" the eye of taſte; and my ſimple mur-
" murs are more melodious to the learned
" ear, than all the rude noiſes of your
" banks, or even the muſic that reſounds
" from your ſtately barges. If the un-
" feeling ſons of wealth and commerce
" judge of me by the mere ſtandard of
" uſefulneſs, I may claim no undiſtin-
" guiſhed rank. While your waters, con-
" fined in deep channels, or lifted above
" the valleys, roll on, a uſeleſs burden to
" the fields, and only ſubſervient to the
" drudgery of bearing temporary mer-
" chandiſes, my ſtream will beſtow un-
" varying fertility on the meadows, du-
" ring the ſummers of future ages. Yet
" I ſcorn to ſubmit my honours to the
" deciſion of thoſe, whoſe hearts are ſhut

" up to taſte and ſentiment. Let me ap-
" peal to nobler judges. The philoſopher
" and poet, by whoſe labours the human
" mind is elevated and refined, and
" opened to pleaſures beyond the con-
" ception of vulgar ſouls, will acknow-
" ledge that the elegant deities who pre-
" ſide over ſimple and natural beauty,
" have inſpired them with their charm-
" ing and inſtructive ideas. The ſweeteſt
" and moſt majeſtic bard that ever ſung,
" has taken a pride in owning his af-
" fection to woods and ſtreams; and
" while the ſtupendous monuments of
" Roman grandeur, the columns which
" pierced the ſkies, and the aqueducts
" which poured their waves over moun-
" tains and valleys, are ſunk in oblivion,
" the gently winding Mincius ſtill re-
" tains his tranquil honours. And when
" thy glories, proud Genius! are loſt and
" forgotten; when the flood of com-
" merce,

" merce, which now ſupplies thy urn, is
" turned into another courſe, and has
" left thy channel dry and deſolate; the
" ſoftly-flowing Avon ſhall ſtill murmur
" in ſong, and his banks receive the
" homage of all who are beloved by
" Phœbus and the Muſes."

ON

MONASTIC INSTITUTIONS.

I HAPPENED the other day to take a ſolitary walk amongſt the venerable ruins of an old Abbey. The ſtillneſs and ſolemnity of the place were favourable to thought, and naturally led me to a train of ideas relative to the ſcene; when, like a good proteſtant, I began to indulge a ſecret triumph in the ruin of ſo many ſtructures which I had always conſidered

ſidered as the haunts of ignorance an ſuperſtition.

Ye are fallen, ſaid I, ye dark and gloomy manſions of miſtaken zeal, where the proud prieſt and lazy monk fattened upon the riches of the land, and crept like vermin from their cells to ſpread their poiſonous doctrines through the nation, and diſturb the peace of kings. Obſcure in their origin, but daring and ambitious in their guilt! See how the pure light of heaven is clouded by the dim glaſs of the arched window, ſtained with the gaudy colours of monkiſh tales and legendary fiction; fit emblem how reluctantly they admitted the fairer light of truth amidſt theſe dark receſſes, and how much they have debaſed its genuine luſtre! The low cells, the long and narrow aiſles, the gloomy arches, the damp and ſecret caverns which wind beneath

neath the hollow ground, far from impreſſing on the mind the idea of the God of truth and love, ſeem only fit for thoſe dark places of the earth in which are the habitations of cruelty. Theſe maſſy ſtones and ſcattered reliques of the vaſt edifice, like the large bones and gigantic armour of a once formidable ruffian, produce emotions of mingled dread and exultation. Farewel, ye once venerated ſeats! enough of you remains, and may it always remain, to remind us from what we have eſcaped, and make poſterity for ever thankful for this fairer age of liberty and light.

Such were for a while my meditations; but it is cruel to inſult a fallen enemy, and I gradually fell into a different train of thought. I began to conſider whether ſomething might not be advanced in favour of theſe inſtitutions during the barbarous

barous ages in which they flouriſhed; and though they have been productive of much miſchief and ſuperſtition, whether they might not have ſpread the glimmering of a feeble ray of knowledge, through that thick night which once involved the weſtern hemiſphere.

AND where, indeed, could the precious remains of claſſical learning, and the divine monuments of ancient taſte, have been ſafely lodged amidſt the ravages of that age of ferocity and rapine which ſucceeded the deſolation of the Roman empire, except in ſanctuaries like theſe, conſecrated by the ſuperſtition of the times beyond their intrinſic merit? The frequency of wars, and the licentious cruelty with which they were conducted, left neither the hamlet of the peaſant nor the caſtle of the baron free from depredation; but the church and monaſtery generally remained

remained inviolate. There Homer and Ariſtotle were obliged to ſhroud their heads from the rage of gothic ignorance; and there the ſacred records of divine truth were preſerved, like treaſure hid in the earth in troubleſome times, ſafe, but unenjoyed. Some of the barbarous nations were converted before their conqueſts, and moſt of them ſoon after their ſettlement in the countries they over-ran. Thoſe buildings which their new faith taught them to venerate, afforded a ſhelter for thoſe valuable manuſcripts, which muſt otherwiſe have been deſtroyed in the common wreck. At the revival of learning, they were produced from their dormitories. A copy of the pandect of Juſtinian, that valuable remain of Roman law, which firſt gave to Europe the idea of a more perfect juriſprudence, and gave men a reliſh for a new and important ſtudy, was diſcovered in a monaſtery of Amalphi.

Amalphi. Moſt of the claſſics were recovered by the ſame means; and to this it is owing, to the books and learning preſerved in theſe repoſitories, that we were not obliged to begin anew, and trace every art by ſlow and uncertain ſteps from its firſt origin. Science, already full grown and vigorous, awaked as from a trance, ſhook her pinions, and ſoon ſoared to the heights of knowledge.

Nor was ſhe entirely idle during her receſs; at leaſt we cannot but confeſs that what little learning remained in the world was amongſt the prieſts and religious orders. Books, before the invention of paper, and the art of printing, were ſo dear, that few private perſons poſſeſſed any. The only libraries were in convents; and the monks were often employed in tranſcribing manuſcripts, which was a very tedious, and at that time

time a very neceſſary taſk. It was frequently enjoined as a penance for ſome ſlight offence, or given as an exerciſe to the younger part of the community. The monks were obliged by their rules to ſpend ſome ſtated hours every day in reading and ſtudy; nor was any one to be choſen abbot without a competent ſhare of learning. They were the only hiſtorians; and though their accounts be interwoven with many a legendary tale, and darkened by much ſuperſtition, ſtill they are better than no hiſtories at all; and we cannot but think ourſelves obliged to them for tranſmitting to us, in any dreſs, the annals of their country.

They were likewiſe almoſt the ſole inſtructors of youth. Towards the end of the tenth century, there were no ſchools in Europe but the monaſteries, and thoſe which belonged to epiſcopal reſidences; nor

nor any maſters but the Benedictines. It is true, their courſe of education extended no further than what they called the ſeven liberal arts, and theſe were taught in a very dry and unintereſting manner. But this was the genius of the age, and it ſhould not be imputed to them as a reproach that they did not teach well, when no one taught better. We are guilty of great unfairneſs when we compare the ſchool-men with the philoſophers of a more enlightened age: we ſhould contraſt them with thoſe of their own times; with a high-conſtable of France who could not read; with kings who made the ſign of the croſs in confirmation of their charters, becauſe they could not write their names; with a whole people without the leaſt glimmering of taſte or literature. Whatever was their real knowledge, there was a much greater difference between men of learning, and the bulk of the nation, at

that time, than there is at preſent; and certainly, ſome of the diſciples of thoſe ſchools who, though now fallen into diſrepute, were revered in their day by the names of the ſubtle, or the angelic doctors, ſhewed an acuteneſs and ſtrength of genius, which, if properly directed, would have gone far in philoſophy; and they only failed becauſe their enquiries were not the objects of the human powers. Had they exerciſed half that acuteneſs on facts and experiments, they had been truly great men. However, there were not wanting ſome, even in the darkeſt ages, whoſe names will be always remembered with pleaſure by the lovers of ſcience. Alcuin, the preceptor of Charlemagne, the firſt who introduced a taſte for polite literature into France, and the chief inſtrument that prince made uſe of in his noble endeavours for the encouragement of learning; to whom the univerſities of

Soiſſons,

Soiſſons, Tours and Paris owe their origin: the hiſtorians, Mathew Paris, William of Malmſbury; Savanarola; the elegant and unfortunate Abelard; and, to crown the reſt, the Engliſh Franciſcan, Roger Bacon.

It may be here obſerved, that forbidding the vulgar tongue in the offices of devotion, and in reading the ſcriptures, though undoubtedly a great corruption in the Chriſtian Church, was of infinite ſervice to the intereſts of learning. When the eccleſiaſtics had locked up their religion in a foreign tongue, they would take care not to loſe the key. This gave an importance to the learned languages; and every ſcholar could not only read, but wrote and diſputed in Latin, which without ſuch a motive would probably have been no more ſtudied than the Chineſe. And at a time when the modern lan-

guages of Europe were yet unformed and barbarous, Latin was of great uſe as a kind of univerſal tongue, by which learned men might converſe and correſpond with each other.

INDEED the monks were almoſt the only ſet of men who had leiſure or opportunity to pay the leaſt attention to literary ſubjects. A learned education (and a very little went to that title) was reckoned peculiar to the religious. It was almoſt eſteemed a blemiſh on the ſavage and martial character of the gentry, to have any tincture of letters. A man, therefore, of a ſtudious and retired turn, averſe to quarrels, and not deſirous of the fierce and ſanguinary glory of thoſe times, beheld in the cloiſter a peaceful and honourable ſanctuary; where, without the reproach of cowardice, or danger of invaſion, he might devote himſelf to

learning; aſſociate with men of his own turn, and have free acceſs to libraries and manuſcripts: In this enlightened and poliſhed age, where learning is diffuſed through every rank, and many a merchant's clerk poſſeſſes more real knowledge than half the literati of that æra, we can ſcarcely conceive how groſs an ignorance overſpread thoſe times, and how totally all uſeful learning might have been loſt amongſt us, had it not been for an order of men, veſted with peculiar privileges, and protected by even a ſuperſtitious degree of reverence.

THUS the Muſes, with their attendant arts, in ſtrange diſguiſe indeed, and uncouth trappings, took refuge in the peaceful gloom of the convent. Statuary carved a madonna or a crucifix; Painting illuminated a miſſal; Eloquence made the panegyric of a ſaint; and Hiſtory com-

poſed a legend. Yet ſtill they breathed, and were ready, at any happier period, to emerge from obſcurity with all their native charms and undiminiſhed luſtre.

But there were other views in which thoſe who devoted themſelves to a monaſtic life might be ſuppoſed uſeful to ſociety. They were often employed either in cultivating their gardens, or in curious mechanical works; as indeed the nuns are ſtill famous for many elegant and ingenious manufactures. By the conſtant communication they had with thoſe of their own order, and with their common head at Rome, they maintained ſome intercourſe between nations at a time when travelling was dangerous, and commerce had not, as now, made the moſt diſtant parts of the globe familiar to each other: and they kept up a more intimate bond of union amongſt learned men of all countries,

tries, who would otherwiſe have been ſecluded from all knowledge of each other. A monk might travel with more convenience than any one elſe; his perſon was ſafer, and he was ſure of meeting with proper accommodations. The intercourſe with Rome muſt have been peculiarly favourable to theſe northern nations; as Italy for a long time led the way in every improvement of politeneſs or literature: and if we imported their ſuperſtition, we likewiſe imported their manufactures, their knowledge, and their taſte. Thus Alfred ſent for Italian monks, when he wanted to civilize his people, and introduce amongſt them ſome tincture of letters. It may likewiſe be preſumed that they tempered the rigour of monarchy. Indeed they, as well as the ſovereigns, endeavoured to enſlave the people; but ſubjection was not likely to be ſo abject and unlimited where the object of it was divided, and

each ſhowed by turns that the other might be oppoſed. It muſt have been of ſervice to the cauſe of liberty to have a ſet of men, whoſe laws, privileges, and immunities the moſt daring kings were afraid to trample on; and this, before a more enlightened ſpirit of freedom had ariſen, might have its effect in preventing the ſtates of chriſtendom from falling into ſuch entire ſlavery as the Aſiatics.

SUCH an order would in ſome degree check the exceſſive regard paid to birth. A man of mean origin and obſcure parentage ſaw himſelf excluded from almoſt every path of ſecular preferment, and almoſt treated as a being of an inferior ſpecies by the high and haughty ſpirit of the gentry; but he was at liberty to aſpire to the higheſt dignities of the church; and there have been many who, like Sextus V. and cardinal Wolſey, have by their induſtry

induſtry and perſonal merit alone raiſed themſelves to a level with kings.

It ſhould likewiſe be remembered that many of the orders were charitable inſtitutions; as the *knights of faith and charity* in the thirteenth century, who were aſſociated for the purpoſe of ſuppreſſing thoſe bands of robbers which infeſted the public roads in France; the *brethren of the order of the redemption*, for redeeming ſlaves from the Mahometans; the *order of St. Anthony*, firſt eſtabliſhed for the relief of the poor under certain diſorders; and the *brethren and ſiſters of the pious and chriſtian ſchools*, for educating poor children. Theſe ſupplied the place of hoſpitals and other ſuch foundations, which are now eſtabliſhed on the broader baſis of public benevolence. To bind up the wounds of the ſtranger, was peculiarly the office of the inhabitants of

the convent; and they often ſhared the charities they received. The exerciſe of hoſpitality is ſtill their characteriſtic, and muſt have been of particular uſe formerly, when there were not the conveniences and accommodations for travelling which we now enjoy. The learned ſtranger was always ſure of an agreeable reſidence amongſt them; and as they all underſtood Latin, they ſerved him for interpreters, and introduced him to a ſight of whatever was curious or valuable in the countries which he viſited. They checked the ſpirit of ſavage fierceneſs, to which our warlike anceſtors were ſo prone, with the mildneſs and ſanctity of religious influences; they preſerved ſome reſpect to law and order, and often decided controverſies by means leſs bloody than the ſword, though confeſſedly more ſuperſtitious.

A PROOF that theſe inſtitutions had a favourable

favourable aſpect towards civilization, may be drawn from a late hiſtory of Ireland. "Soon after the introduction of "chriſtianity into that kingdom," ſays Dr. Leland, "the monks fixed their ha- "bitations in deſarts, which they culti- "vated with their own hands, and ren- "dered the moſt delightful ſpots in the "kingdom. Theſe deſarts became well "policed cities, and it is remarkable "enough, that to the monks we owe ſo "uſeful an inſtitution in Ireland as the "bringing great numbers together into "one civil community. In theſe cities "the monks ſet up ſchools, and taught, "not only the youth of Ireland, but "the neighbouring nations; furniſhing "them alſo with books. They became "umpires between contending chiefs, "and when they could not confine them "within the bounds of reaſon and reli- "gion, at leaſt terrified them by denoun-

" cing divine vengeance againſt their " exceſſes."

LET it be conſidered too, that when the minds of men began to open, ſome of the moſt eminent reformers ſprung from the boſom of the church, and even of the convent. It was not the laity who began to think. The eccleſiaſtics were the firſt to perceive the errors they had introduced. The church was reformed from within, not from without; and like the ſilk-worm, when ripened in their cells to maturer vigour and perfection, they pierced the cloud themſelves had ſpun, and within which they had ſo long been enveloped.

AND let not the good proteſtant be too much ſtartled if I here venture to inſinuate, that the monaſteries were ſchools of ſome high and reſpectable virtues. Poverty,

ty, chaſtity, and a renunciation of the world, were certainly intended in the firſt plan of theſe inſtitutions; and though, from the unavoidable frailty of human nature, they were not always obſerved, certain it is, that many individuals amongſt them have been ſtriking examples of the ſelf-denying virtues: and as the influence they acquired was only built upon the voluntary homage of the mind, it may be preſumed ſuch an aſcendancy was not originally gained without ſome ſpecies of merit. The fondneſs for monkery is eaſily deduced from ſome of the beſt principles in the human heart. It was indeed neceſſity, that in the third century firſt drove the chriſtians to ſhelter themſelves from the Decian perſecution in the ſolitary deſarts of Thebais, but the humour ſoon ſpread, and numbers under the name of hermits, or eremites, ſecluded themſelves from the commerce

merce of mankind, chooſing the wildeſt ſolitudes, living in caves and hollows of the rocks, and ſubſiſting on ſuch roots and herbs as the ground afforded them. About the fourth century they were gathered into communities, and increaſed with ſurpriſing rapidity. It was then that, by a great and ſudden revolution, the fury of perſecution had ceaſed, and the governing powers were become friendly to chriſtianity. But the agitation of men's minds did not immediately ſubſide with the ſtorm. The chriſtians had ſo long experienced the neceſſity of reſigning all the enjoyments of life, and were ſo detached from every tie which might interfere with the profeſſion of their faith, that upon a more favourable turn of affairs they hardly dared open their minds to pleaſurable emotions. They thought the life of a good man muſt be a continual warfare between mind and body; and having been long

long uſed to ſee eaſe and ſafety on the one ſide, and virtue on the other, no wonder if the aſſociation was ſo ſtrong in their minds, as to ſuggeſt the neceſſity of voluntary mortification, and lead them to inflict thoſe ſufferings upon themſelves, which they no longer apprehended from others. They had continually experienced the amazing effects of chriſtianity in ſupporting its followers under hardſhip, tortures, and death; and they thought little of its influence in regulating the common behaviour of life, if it produced none of thoſe great exertions they had been uſed to contemplate. They were ſtruck with the change from heathen licentiouſneſs to the purity of the goſpel; and thought they could never be far enough removed from that bondage of the ſenſes which it had juſt coſt them ſo violent a ſtruggle to eſcape. The minds of men were working with newly-received opinions, not yet mellowed

mellowed into a rational faith; and the young converts, aſtoniſhed at the grandeur and ſublimity of the doctrines which then firſt entered their hearts with irreſiſtable force, thought them worthy to engroſs their whole attention. The myſtic dreams of the Platoniſt mingled with the enthuſiaſm of the martyr; and it ſoon became the prevailing opinion, that ſilence, ſolitude, and contemplation, were neceſſary for the reception of divine truth. Miſtaken ideas prevailed of a purity and perfection far ſuperior to the rules of common life, which was only to be attained by thoſe who denied themſelves all the indulgences of ſenſe; and thus the aſcetic ſeverities of the cloiſter ſucceeded in ſome degree to the philoſophic poverty of the Cynic ſchool, and the lofty virtues of the Stoic porch.

INDEED, it is now the prevailing taſte in

in morals to decry every obſervance which has the leaſt appearance of rigour; and to inſiſt only on the ſofter virtues. But let it be remembered, that ſelf-command and ſelf-denial are as neceſſary to the practice of benevolence, charity, and compaſſion, as to any other duty; that it is impoſſible to live to others without denying ourſelves; and that the man who has not learned to curb his appetites and paſſions is ill qualified for thoſe ſacrifices which the friendly affections are continually requiring of him. The man who has that one quality of ſelf-command will find little difficulty in the practice of any other duty; as, on the contrary, he who has it not, tho' poſſeſſed of the gentleſt feelings, and moſt refined ſenſibilities, will ſoon find his benevolence ſink into a mere companionable eaſineſs of temper, neither uſeful to others nor happy for himſelf. A noble enthuſiaſm is ſometimes of uſe

to

to ſhow how far human nature can go. Though it may not be proper, or deſirable, that numbers ſhould ſeclude themſelves from the common duties and ordinary avocations of life, for the auſterer leſſons of the cloiſter, yet it is not unuſeful that ſome ſhould puſh their virtues to even a romantic height; and it is encouraging to reflect in the hour of temptation, that the love of eaſe, the averſion to pain, every appetite and paſſion, and even the ſtrongeſt propenſities in our nature, have been controuled; that the empire of the mind over the body has been aſſerted in its fulleſt extent; and that there have been men in all ages capable of voluntarily renouncing all the world offers, voluntarily ſuffering all it dreads, and living independent, and unconnected with it. Nor was it a ſmall advantage, or ill calculated to ſupport the dignity of ſcience, that a learned man might be reſpectable in a coarſe gown, a lea-

a leathern girdle, and bare-footed. Cardinal Ximenes preſerved the ſevere ſimplicity of a convent amidſt the pomp and luxury of palaces; and to thoſe who thus thought it becoming in the higheſt ſtations to affect the appearance of poverty, the reality ſurely could not be very dreadful.

THERE is yet another light in which theſe inſtitutions may be conſidered. It is ſurely not improper to provide a retreat for thoſe who, ſtained by ſome deep and enormous crime, wiſh to expiate by ſevere and uncommon penitence thoſe offences which render them unworthy of freer commerce with the world. Repentance is never ſo ſecure from a relapſe as when it breaks off at once from every former connection, and entering upon a new courſe of life, bids adieu to every object that might revive the idea of temp-

tations which have once prevailed. In theſe ſolemn retreats, the ſtillneſs and acknowledged ſanctity of the place, with the ſtriking novelty of every thing around them, might have great influence in calming the paſſions; might break the force of habit, and ſuddenly induce a new turn of thinking. There are likewiſe afflictions ſo overwhelming to humanity, that they leave no reliſh in the mind for any thing elſe than to enjoy its own melancholy in ſilence and ſolitude; and to a heart torn with remorſe, or oppreſt with ſorrow, the gloomy ſeverities of La Trappe are really a relief. Retirement is alſo the favourite wiſh of age. Many a ſtateſman, and many a warrior, ſick of the buſtle of that world to which they had devoted the prime of their days, have longed for ſome quiet cell, where, like cardinal Wolſey, or Charles the Fifth, they might ſhroud their grey hairs, and loſe

ſight of the follies with which they had been too much tainted.

THOUGH there is, perhaps, leſs to plead for immuring beauty in a cloiſter, and confining that part of the ſpecies who are formed to ſhine in families and ſweeten ſociety, to the barren duties and auſtere diſcipline of a monaſtic life; yet circumſtances might occur, in which they would, even to a woman, be a welcome refuge. A young female, whom accident or war had deprived of her natural protectors, muſt, in an age of barbariſm, be peculiarly expoſed and helpleſs. A convent offered her an aſylum where ſhe might be ſafe, at leaſt, if not happy; and add to the conſciouſneſs of unviolated virtue the flattering dreams of angelic purity and perfection. There were orders, as well amongſt the women as the men, inſtituted for charitable pur-

poſes, ſuch as that of the *Virgins of love*, or *Daughters of mercy*, founded in 1660, for the relief of the ſick poor; with others for inſtructing their children. Theſe muſt have been peculiarly ſuited to the ſoftneſs and compaſſion of the ſex, and to this it is no doubt owing, that ſtill, in catholic countries, ladies of the higheſt rank often viſit the hoſpitals and houſes of the poor; waiting on them with the moſt tender aſſiduity, and performing ſuch offices as our proteſtant ladies would be ſhocked at the thoughts of. We ſhould alſo conſider, that moſt of the females who now take the veil, are ſuch as have no agreeable proſpects in life. Why ſhould not theſe be allowed to quit a world which will never miſs them? It is eaſier to retire from the public, than to ſupport its diſregard. The convent is to them a ſhelter from poverty and neglect. Their little community grows dear to them.

them. The equality which ſubſiſts among theſe ſiſters of obſcurity, the ſimilarity of their fate, the peace, the leiſure they enjoy, give riſe to the moſt endearing friendſhips. Their innocence is ſhielded by the ſimplicity of their life from even the idea of ill; and they are flattered by the notion of a voluntary renunciation of pleaſures, which, probably, had they continued in the world, they would have had little ſhare in.

After all that can be ſaid, we have reaſon enough to rejoice that the ſuperſtitions of former times are now fallen into diſrepute. What might be a palliative at one time, ſoon became a crying evil in itſelf. When the fuller day of ſcience began to dawn, the monkiſh orders were willing to exclude its brightneſs, that the dim lamp might ſtill glimmer in their cell. Their growing vices

have rendered them juſtly odious to ſociety, and they ſeem in a fair way of being for ever aboliſhed. But may we not ſtill hope that the world was better than it would have been without them; and that he, who knows to bring good out of evil, has made them, in their day, ſubſervient to ſome uſeful purpoſes. The corruptions of chriſtianity, which have been accumulating for ſo many ages, ſeem to be now gradually clearing away, and ſome future period may perhaps exhibit our religion in all its native ſimplicity.

So the pure limpid ſtream, when foul with ſtains
Of ruſhing torrents, and deſcending rains;
Works itſelf clear, and as it runs refines,
Till by degrees the floating mirror ſhines;
Reflects each flower that on its borders grows,
And a new heaven in its fair boſom ſhews.

ON THE

PLEASURE

DERIVED FROM

OBJECTS OF TERROR;

WITH

SIR BERTRAND,

A FRAGMENT.

THAT the exercise of our benevolent feelings, as called forth by the view of human afflictions, should be a source of pleasure, cannot appear wonderful to one who considers that relation between the moral and natural system of man,

which has connected a degree of ſatisfaction with every action or emotion productive of the general welfare. The painful ſenſation immediately ariſing from a ſcene of miſery, is ſo much ſoftened and alleviated by the reflex ſenſe of ſelf-approbation attending virtuous ſympathy, that we find, on the whole, a very exquiſite and refined pleaſure remaining, which makes us deſirous of again being witneſſes to ſuch ſcenes, inſtead of flying from them with diſguſt and horror. It is obvious how greatly ſuch a proviſion muſt conduce to the ends of mutual ſupport and aſſiſtance. But the apparent delight with which we dwell upon objects of pure terror, where our moral feelings are not in the leaſt concerned, and no paſſion ſeems to be excited but the depreſſing one of fear, is a paradox of the heart, much more difficult of ſolution.

THE reality of this ſource of pleaſure ſeems evident from daily obſervation. The greedineſs with which the tales of ghoſts and goblins, of murders, earthquakes, fires, ſhipwrecks, and all the moſt terrible diſaſters attending human life, are devoured by every ear, muſt have been generally remarked. Tragedy, the moſt favourite work of fiction, has taken a full ſhare of thoſe ſcenes; "it has ſupt full with horrors," and has, perhaps, been more indebted to them for public admiration than to its tender and pathetic part. The ghoſt of Hamlet, Macbeth deſcending into the witches' cave, and the tent ſcene in Richard, command as forcibly the attention of our ſouls as the parting of Jaffier and Belvidera, the fall of Wolſey, or the death of Shore. The inſpiration of *terror* was by the ancient critics aſſigned as the peculiar province of tragedy; and the Greek

Greek and Roman tragedians have introduced ſome extraordinary perſonages for this purpoſe: not only the ſhades of the dead, but the furies, and other fabulous inhabitants of the infernal regions. Collins, in his moſt poetical ode to Fear, has finely enforced this idea.

Tho' gentle Pity claim her mingled part,
Yet all the thunders of the ſcene are thine.

The old Gothic romance and the Eaſtern tale, with their genii, giants, enchantments, and transformations, however a refined critic may cenſure them as abſurd and extravagant, will ever retain a moſt powerful influence on the mind, and intereſt the reader, independently of all peculiarity of taſte. Thus the great Milton, who had a ſtrong bias to theſe wildneſſes of the imagination, has, with ſtriking effect, made the ſtories "of foreſts and enchantments drear," a favourite

favourite ſubject with his *Penſeroſo*; and had undoubtedly their awakening images ſtrong upon his mind when he breaks out,

> Call up him that left half-told
> The ſtory of Cambuſcan bold; &c.

How are we then to account for the pleaſure derived from ſuch objects? I have often been led to imagine that there is a deception in theſe caſes; and that the avidity with which we attend is not a proof of our receiving real pleaſure. The pain of ſuſpenſe, and the irreſiſtible deſire of ſatisfying curioſity, when once raiſed, will account for our eagerneſs to go quite through an adventure, though we ſuffer actual pain during the whole courſe of it. We rather chooſe to ſuffer the ſmart pang of a violent emotion than the uneaſy craving of an unſatisfied deſire. That this principle, in many inſtances, may involuntarily carry us through what we

we diſlike, I am convinced from experience. This is the impulſe which renders the pooreſt and moſt inſipid narrative intereſting when once we get fairly into it; and I have frequently felt it with regard to our modern novels, which, if lying on my table, and taken up in an idle hour, have led me through the moſt tedious and diſguſting pages, while, like Piſtol eating his leek, I have ſwallowed and execrated to the end. And it will not only force us through dulneſs, but through actual torture—through the relation of a Damien's execution, or an inquiſitor's act of faith. When children, therefore, liſten with pale and mute attention to the frightful ſtories of apparitions, we are not, perhaps, to imagine that they are in a ſtate of enjoyment, any more than the poor bird which is dropping into the mouth of the rattleſnake; they are chained by the ears, and faſcinated by curioſity.

curioſity. This ſolution, however, does not ſatisfy me with reſpect to the well-wrought ſcenes of artificial terror which are formed by a ſublime and vigorous imagination. Here, though we know before-hand what to expect, we enter into them with eagerneſs, in queſt of a pleaſure already experienced. This is the pleaſure conſtantly attached to the excitement of ſurpriſe from new and wonderful objects. A ſtrange and unexpected event awakens the mind, and keeps it on the ſtretch; and where the agency of inviſible beings is introduced, of "forms unſeen, and mightier far than we," our imagination, darting forth, explores with rapture the new world which is laid open to its view, and rejoices in the expanſion of its powers. Paſſion and fancy co-operating, elevate the ſoul to its higheſt pitch; and the pain of terror is loſt in amazement.

HENCE,

HENCE, the more wild, fanciful, and extraordinary are the circumſtances of a ſcene of horror, the more pleaſure we receive from it; and where they are too near common nature, though violently borne by curioſity through the adventure, we cannot repeat it, or reflect on it, without an over-balance of pain. In the *Arabian Nights* are many moſt ſtriking examples of the terrible, joined with the marvellous: the ſtory of Aladdin, and the travels of Sinbad, are particularly excellent. The *Caſtle of Otranto* is a very ſpirited modern attempt upon the ſame plan of mixed terror, adapted to the model of Gothic romance. The beſt conceived, and the moſt ſtrongly worked-up ſcene of mere natural horror that I recollect, is in Smolett's *Ferdinand Count Fathom*; where the hero, entertained in a lone houſe in a foreſt, finds a corpſe juſt ſlaughtered in the room where he is ſent

to

to ſleep, and the door of which is locked upon him. It may be amuſing for the reader to compare his feelings upon theſe, and from thence form his opinion of the juſtneſs of my theory. The following fragment, in which both theſe manners are attempted to be in ſome degree united, is offered to entertain a ſolitary winter's evening.

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. . . . . After this adventure, Sir Bertrand turned his ſteed towards the wolds, hoping to croſs theſe dreary moors before the curfew. But ere he had proceeded half his journey, he was bewildered by the different tracks, and not being able, as far as the eye could reach, to eſpy any object but the brown heath ſurrounding him, he was at length quite uncertain which

which way he ſhould direct his courſe. Night overtook him in this ſituation. It was one of thoſe nights when the moon gives a faint glimmering of light through the thick black clouds of a lowering ſky. Now and then ſhe ſuddenly emerged in full ſplendor from her veil; and then inſtantly retired behind it, having juſt ſerved to give the forlorn Sir Bertrand a wide extended proſpect over the deſolate waſte. Hope and native courage a while urged him to puſh forwards, but at length the increaſing darkneſs and fatigue of body and mind overcame him; he dreaded moving from the ground he ſtood on, for fear of unknown pits and bogs, and alighting from his horſe in deſpair, he threw himſelf on the ground. He had not long continued in that poſture when the ſullen toll of a diſtant bell ſtruck his ears—he ſtarted up, and, turning towards the ſound, diſcerned a dim twinkling light.

Inſtantly

Inſtantly he ſeized his horſe's bridle, and with cautious ſteps advanced towards it. After a painful march, he was ſtopt by a moated ditch ſurrounding the place from whence the light proceeded; and by a momentary glimpſe of moon-light he had a full view of a large antique manſion, with turrets at the corners, and an ample porch in the center. The injuries of time were ſtrongly marked on every thing about it. The roof in various places was fallen in, the battlements were half demoliſhed, and the windows broken and diſmantled. A draw-bridge, with a ruinous gate-way at each end, led to the court before the building. He entered, and inſtantly the light, which proceeded from a window in one of the turrets, glided along and vaniſhed; at the ſame moment the moon ſunk beneath a black cloud, and the night was darker than ever. All was ſilent. Sir Bertrand faſtened his ſteed

under a ſhed, and approaching the houſe, traverſed its whole front with light and ſlow footſteps. All was ſtill as death. He looked in at the lower windows, but could not diſtinguiſh a ſingle object through the impenetrable gloom. After a ſhort parley with himſelf, he entered the porch, and ſeizing a maſſy iron knocker at the gate, lifted it up, and heſitating, at length ſtruck a loud ſtroke. The noiſe reſounded through the whole manſion with hollow echoes. All was ſtill again. He repeated the ſtrokes more boldly, and louder—another interval of ſilence enſued. A third time he knocked, and a third time all was ſtill. He then fell back to ſome diſtance, that he might diſcern whether any light could be ſeen in the whole front. It again appeared in the ſame place, and quickly glided away as before. At the ſame inſtant, a deep ſullen

toll

toll ſounded from the turret. Sir Bertrand's heart made a fearful ſtop—He was a while motionleſs; then terror impelled him to make ſome haſty ſteps towards his ſteed; but ſhame ſtopt his flight; and, urged by honour, and a reſiſtleſs deſire of finiſhing the adventure, he returned to the porch; and, working up his ſoul to a full ſteadineſs of reſolution, he drew forth his ſword with one hand, and with the other lifted up the latch of the gate. The heavy door, creeking upon its hinges, reluctantly yielded to his hand—he applied his ſhoulder to it, and forced it open—he quitted it, and ſtept forward—the door inſtantly ſhut with a thundering clap. Sir Bertrand's blood was chilled—he turned back to find the door, and it was long ere his trembling hands could ſeize it—but his utmoſt ſtrength could not open it agin. After

ſeveral ineffectual attempts, he looked behind him, and beheld, acroſs a hall, upon a large ſtaircaſe, a pale bluiſh flame, which caſt a diſmal gleam of light around. He again ſummoned forth his courage, and advanced towards it—It retired. He came to the foot of the ſtairs, and, after a moment's deliberation, aſcended. He went ſlowly up, the flame retiring before him, till he came to a wide gallery—The flame proceeded along it, and he followed in ſilent horror, treading lightly, for the echoes of his footſteps ſtartled him. It led him to the foot of another ſtaircaſe, and then vaniſhed. At the ſame inſtant, another toll ſounded from the turret—Sir Bertrand felt it ſtrike upon his heart. He was now in total darkneſs, and, with his arms extended, began to aſcend the ſecond ſtaircaſe. A dead cold hand met his left hand, and firmly graſped

graſped it, drawing him forcibly forwards—he endeavoured to diſengage himſelf, but could not—he made a furious blow with his ſword, and inſtantly a loud ſhriek pierced his ears, and the dead hand was left powerleſs in his—He dropt it, and ruſhed forwards with a deſperate valour. The ſtairs were narrow and winding, and interrupted by frequent breaches, and looſe fragments of ſtone. The ſtaircaſe grew narrower and narrower, and at length terminated in a low iron grate. Sir Bertrand puſhed it open—it led to an intricate winding paſſage, juſt large enough to admit a perſon upon his hands and knees. A faint glimmering of light ſerved to ſhew the nature of the place. Sir Bertrand entered—A deep hollow groan reſounded from a diſtance through the vault—He went forwards, and proceeding beyond the firſt turning, he diſcerned the ſame blue flame which

had before conducted him. He followed it. The vault, at length, ſuddenly opened into a lofty gallery, in the midſt of which a figure appeared, completely armed, thruſting forwards the bloody ſtump of an arm, with a terrible frown and menacing geſture, and brandiſhing a ſword in his hand. Sir Bertrand undauntedly ſprung forwards; and, aiming a fierce blow at the figure, it inſtantly vaniſhed, letting fall a maſſy iron key. The flame now reſted upon a pair of ample folding doors at the end of the gallery. Sir Bertrand went up to it, and applied the key to a brazen lock. With difficulty he turned the bolt. Inſtantly the doors flew open, and diſcovered a large apartment, at the end of which was a coffin reſted upon a bier, with a taper burning on each ſide of it. Along the room, on both ſides, were gigantic ſtatues of black marble,

attired

attired in the Mooriſh habit, and holding enormous ſabres in their right hands. Each of them reared his arm, and advanced one leg forwards as the knight entered; at the ſame moment, the lid of the coffin flew open, and the bell tolled. The flame ſtill glided forwards, and Sir Bertrand reſolutely followed, till he arrived within ſix paces of the coffin. Suddenly, a lady in a ſhroud and black veil roſe up in it, and ſtretched out her arms towards him; at the ſame time, the ſtatues claſhed their ſabres, and advanced. Sir Bertrand flew to the lady, and claſped her in his arms—ſhe threw up her veil, and kiſſed his lips; and inſtantly the whole building ſhook as with an earthquake, and fell aſunder with a horrible craſh. Sir Bertrand was thrown into a ſudden trance, and, on recovering, found himſelf ſeated

on a velvet ſofa, in the moſt magnificent room he had ever ſeen, lighted with innumerable tapers, in luſtres of pure cryſtal. A ſumptuous banquet was ſet in the middle. The doors opening to ſoft muſic, a lady of incomparable beauty, attired with amazing ſplendor, entered, ſurrounded by a troop of gay nymphs, more fair than the Graces. She advanced to the knight, and, falling on her knees, thanked him as her deliverer. The nymphs placed a garland of laurel upon his head, and the lady led him by the hand to the banquet, and ſat beſide him. The nymphs placed themſelves at the table, and a numerous train of ſervants entering, ſerved up the feaſt; delicious muſic playing all the time. Sir Bertrand could not ſpeak for aſtoniſhment: he could only return their honours by courteous looks and geſtures.

geſtures. After the banquet was finiſhed, all retired but the lady, who, leading back the knight to the ſofa, addreſſed him in theſe words: . . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

ON THE

HEROIC POEM

OF

GONDIBERT.

A PERSON engaged in the purſuit of literary fame muſt be ſeverely mortified on obſerving the very ſpeedy neglect into which writers of high merit ſo frequently fall. The revolution of centuries, the extinction of languages, the vaſt convulſions which agitate a whole people,

people, are cauſes which may well be ſubmitted to in overwhelming an author with oblivion; but that in the ſame country, with little variation of language or manners, the delights of one age ſhould become utter ſtrangers in the next, is ſurely an immaturity of fate which conveys reproach upon the inconſtancy of national taſte. That noble band, the Engliſh poets, have ample reaſon for complaining to what unjuſt guardians they have entruſted their renown. While we crown the ſtatue of Shakeſpeare as the prince of dramatic poets, ſhall we forget the works, and almoſt the names of his contemporaries who poſſeſſed ſo much of a kindred ſpirit? Shall the Italian *Paſtor Fido* and *Amyntas* ſtand high in our eſtimation, and the *Faithful Shepherdeſs*, the moſt beautiful paſtoral that a poet's fancy ever formed, be ſcarcely known amongſt us?

Shall

Shall we feel the fire of heroic poetry in tranſlations from Greece and Rome, and never ſearch for it in the native productions of our own country?

THE capital work of Sir *William D'Avenant*, which I now deſire to call forth from its obſcurity, may well be conſidered as in a ſtate of oblivion, ſince we no where meet with alluſions to it, or quotations from it, in our modern writers; and few, I imagine, even of the profeſſed ſtudents in Engliſh claſſics, would think their taſte diſcredited by confeſſing that they had never read GONDIBERT. A very learned and ingenious critic, in his well-known *diſcourſe upon poetical imitation*, has, indeed, taken notice of this poem; but, though he beſtows all due praiſe upon its author, yet the purpoſe for which it is mentioned being to inſtance an eſſential error, we cannot ſuppoſe that his

his authority has ſerved to gain it more readers. Having very judiciouſly laid it down as a general obſervation, that writers, by ſtudiouſly avoiding the fancied diſgrace of imitation, are apt to fall into improper method, forced conceits, and affected expreſſion; he proceeds to introduce the work in queſtion after the following manner: "And, that "the reader may not ſuſpect me of "aſſerting this without experience, let "me exemplify what has been here ſaid "in the caſe of a very eminent perſon, "who, with all the advantages of art "and nature that could be required "to adorn the true poet, was ruined "by this ſingle error. The perſon I "mean was SIR WILLIAM D'AVENANT, "whoſe *Gondibert* will remain a per-"petual monument of the miſchiefs "which muſt ever ariſe from this af-"fectation of originality in lettered and "polite poets."

A con-

A CONSIDERABLE degree of deference is undoubtedly due to a critic of ſuch acknowledged taſte and abilities; yet, ſince it appears to me, that in this inſtance he writes under the influence of ſyſtem and learned prejudice, I ſhall venture to canvaſs the principles upon which he ſupports his cenſure.

THE *method* of Gondibert is firſt objected to by Dr. Hurd, and upon two accounts. Firſt, that the compaſs of the poem is contracted from the limits of the ancient epic, to thoſe of the dramatic form; and by this means, purſuing a cloſe accelerated plot, the opportunity is loſt of introducing digreſſive ornaments, and of giving that minuteneſs of deſcription which confers an air of reality. Now, ſince the author ſets out with diſavowing the common rules of epic poetry, it is certainly unjuſt to try him by thoſe rules.

That

That effects are not produced which he never deſigned to produce, can be no matter of blame; we have only to examine the juſtneſs of the deſign itſelf. It is wrong to expect incompatible qualities as well in compoſitions as in men. A work cannot at the ſame time poſſeſs force and diffuſiveneſs, rapidity and minuteneſs.

Every one who has read Homer without prejudice, will, I doubt not, confeſs that the effects which ſhould reſult from the great events of the ſtory are much broken and impeded by that very minuteneſs of deſcription, and frequency of digreſſion which D'avenant is blamed for rejecting. The mind, warmed by an intereſting narration, either in hiſtory, poetry, or romance, requires the writer to keep up with its exertions, and cannot bear him to flag in his pace, or turn aſide in purſuit of other objects. The proper end

end of epic poetry, according to Dr. Hurd, is *admiration*. This, I imagine, would by no means have been allowed by our author, who ſeems rather to have placed it in intereſting the paſſions, inculcating noble ſentiments, and informing the underſtanding: nor does it anſwer the idea of Horace, who praiſes Homer for his moral leſſons, for teaching

——Quid ſit pulcrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non.

However, a due limitation of ſubject, and ſomething of rapidity in purſuing it, appear very neceſſary to the production of a conſiderable effect, of what kind ſoever; and a pompous diſplay of foreign circumſtances muſt always debilitate more than adorn. It appears an extremely bad compliment to an epic poem, to ſay that its chief beauty lies in the epiſodes. Indeed, epic poetry, as exiſting in the models of antiquity,

antiquity, or their copies, by no means, I think, deſerves the title given by critics, of the higheſt ſpecies of poetical compoſition. The tedious compaſs of the ſubject, the neceſſity of employing ſo large a ſhare of the work in the relation of trifling occurrences for the ſake of connexion, and the frequency of interruptions from collateral matter, inevitably cauſe both the poet's exertions and the reader's attention to intermit; and it is no wonder that Homer, and Virgil too, ſometimes nod over their labours. The author of Gondibert ſeems to have been ſenſible of theſe inconveniences, and upon fair compariſon of the epic and dramatic form, to have preferred the latter, as capable of more ſpirit, and uniform dignity. We ſhall find, however, in reviewing the poem, that he has by no means reſtricted himſelf ſo narrowly as to preclude all ornamental deviations;

and though they may not deſerve the title of epiſodes, yet in his ſhort and unfiniſhed piece, they have all the deſirable effect of a pleaſing variety.

THE ſecond objection which Dr. Hurd brings againſt the *method* of this poem, is the rejection of all ſupernatural agency, or what conſtitutes the *machinery* of the ancient epic poem. But for this the critic himſelf offers a vindication, when he commends the author for not running into the wild fables of the Italian romances, "which had too ſlender a foundation in "the ſerious belief of his age to juſtify a "relation to them." Now, by making this *belief* an eſſential rule of propriety with reſpect to the machinery, an author in an enlightened period, ſuch as that of D'avenant, is, in effect, prohibited from its uſe altogether; for the abſtracted nature of a pure and philoſophical religion

renders it utterly unfit for the purpoſes of poetical fiction. The works of ſuch Chriſtian poets as have attempted to form a ſyſtem of machinery upon the ideas of ſaints, angels, and tutelary ſpirits, will ſufficiently prove that their religion, even with a mixture of popular ſuperſtition, was ill calculated to aſſiſt their imagination. Two writers, whom one would little expect to meet upon the ſame ground, Sir Richard Blackmore and Monſ. Voltaire, have given inſtances of the ſame faulty plan in this reſpect; and nothing in the good Knight's epic labours can more deſerve the attack of ridicule, than the divine miſſion in the Henriade for inſtructing his Majeſty in the ſublime myſteries of tranſubſtantiation.

It was a very juſt charge which Plato brought againſt Homer, that he had greatly contributed to debaſe religion by

the unworthy and abſurd repreſentations he has given of the celeſtial beings, both with reſpect to their power and their juſtice; and this is a fault which the poet muſt always in ſome meaſure be guilty of, when he too familiarly mixes divine agency with human events. Nor does it appear more favourable to the greatneſs of the human perſonages that they are on all occaſions ſo beholden to the immediate interpoſition of divine allies. The refined and judicious Virgil, though he has tolerably kept up the dignity of his Deities, has yet very much lowered his heroes from this cauſe. When we ſee Æneas, the ſon of a Goddeſs, aided by a God, and covered with celeſtial armour, with difficulty vanquiſhing the gallant Turnus, we conclude, that without ſuch odds, the victory muſt have fallen on the other ſide. Under ſuch a ſyſtem of ſupernatural agency, there was no other

way

way of exalting a man than making him, like Diomed, war againſt the Gods, or, like Cato, approve a cauſe which they had unjuſtly condemned. Surely, a "*ſober* intermixture of religion" can never be attributed to the ancient epic. The poem of Gondibert is, indeed, without all this mixture of religious machinery, whether it be termed ſober or extravagant. Human means are brought to accompliſh human ends; and Cowley, in his recommendatory lines prefixed to the work, has thus expreſſed his approbation of this part of the plan.

Methinks heroic poeſie till now
Like ſome fantaſtique fairy-land did ſhow;
Gods, Devils, Nymphs, Witches, and Giant's race,
And all but Man, in man's beſt work had place.
Thou, like ſome worthy Knight, with ſacred arms
Doſt drive the Monſters thence, and end the charms:
Inſtead of theſe doſt Men and Manners plant,
The things which that rich ſoil did chiefly want.

We ſhall ſee hereafter, that the author has not neglected to introduce *religious ſentiment*, and that of a more noble and elevated kind than can eaſily be paralleled in poetry.

But as the poet, in the critic's opinion, did too much in baniſhing every thing ſupernatural in the events, ſo he did too little in retaining the fantaſtic notions of love and honour in the characters of his piece, which were derived from the ſame ſource of fiction and romance. There is, however, an eſſential difference between the caſes. Artificial ſentiments, however unnatural at firſt, may, from the operation of particular cauſes, become ſo familiar as to be adopted into the manners of the age. Inſtances of faſhion in ſentiment are almoſt as frequent as of faſhion in dreſs. It is certain that the romantic ideas of love and honour did in fact prevail

vail in a high degree during a conſiderable period of the later ages, owing to cauſes which the ſame ingenious critic has in a very curious manner inveſtigated, in his *letters on Chivalry and Romance*. They gave the leading tone to all poliſhed manners; and gallantry was as ſerious a principle in the Italian courts, as love to their country in the ſtates of Greece or old Rome. Supernatural agency in human events, on the other hand, however commonly pretended, or firmly believed, would never approach one ſtep nearer to reality. After all, the author of Gondibert could not intend to reduce his poem to mere hiſtory; but he choſe to take a poetical licence in the dignity and elevation of his ſentiments, rather than in the marvellouſneſs of its events. He thought he might attribute to the exalted perſonages of courts and camps the ſame nobleneſs of mind which

himſelf, a courtier and a ſoldier, poſſeſſed. If his work be allowed leſs grand and entertaining from the want of ſuch ornaments as thoſe of his predeceſſors are decorated with, it will yet be difficult to ſhew how, at his time, they could have been applied conſiſtently with good ſenſe and improved taſte.

So much in vindication of the general *method* of Sir W. D'avenant's poem. With reſpect to its *execution*, the juſtice of Dr. Hurd's cenſure cannot be controverted. That his ſentiments are frequently far-fetched and affected, and his expreſſion quaint and obſcure, is but too obviouſly apparent; and theſe faults, together with the want of harmony in verſification, will ſufficiently account for the neglect into which the work is fallen, though intereſting in its ſtory, and thick ſown with beauties. Readers who take

up a book merely for the indolent amuſement of a leiſure hour, cannot endure the labour of unharbouring a fine thought from the cover of perplexed expreſſion. The *pleaſure* ariſing from a flowing line, or a rounded period, is more engaging to them, becauſe more eaſily enjoyed, than that from a ſublime or witty conception. The author's faulty *execution*, however, aroſe from a ſource directly contrary to the "dread of imitation." Imitation itſelf led him to it; for almoſt all the models of polite literature exiſting in his own country, and indeed in the other poliſhed nations of Europe, were characterized by the very ſame vitiation of taſte. Among our own writers, it is ſufficient to inſtance Donne, Suckling and Cowley, for this conſtant affectation of wit and uncommon ſentiment, and for a conſequent obſcurity of expreſſion. Yet all theſe, and Sir W. D'avenant, perhaps, in

in a more eminent degree than the reſt, had for great occaſions, above the temptation of trifling, a majeſtic and nervous ſimplicity, both of ſentiment and expreſſion; which, with our more refined taſte and language, we have never been able to equal.

I SHOULD now hope that the reader would ſet out with me upon a nearer inſpection of this poem, with the general *idea* of its being the work of an elevated genius, pregnant with a rich ſtore of free and noble ſentiment, faſhioned by an intimate commerce with the great world, and boldly purſuing an original, but not an unſkilful plan.

THE meaſure choſen for this poem is that which we now almoſt confine to elegy. This choice does not appear very judicious; for, although our elegiac ſtanza poſſeſſes

poſſeſſes a ſtrength and fulneſs which renders it not unſuitable to heroic ſubjects, yet, in a piece of conſiderable length, every returning meaſure muſt become tireſome from its frequent repetitions. And this is not the worſt effect of returning ſtanzas, in a long work. The neceſſity of comprizing a ſentence within the limits of the meaſure is the tyranny of Procruſtes to thought. For the ſake of a diſagreeable uniformity, expreſſion muſt conſtantly be cramped or extended. In general, the latter expedient will be practiſed, as the eaſieſt; and thus both ſentiment and language will be enfeebled by unmeaning expletives. This, indeed, in ſome meaſure, is the effect of rhyme couplets; and ſtill more of the Latin hexameter and pentameter. In our author, a redundancy of thought, running out into parentheſes, ſeems to have been produced, or at leaſt encouraged by the meaſure.

meaſure. But I think he has generally preſerved a force and majeſty of expreſſion.

It would have been highly injudicious for one who has rejected all poetical machinery, to have begun his poem with the ancient form of invoking a Muſe. Indeed, in all modern writers this invocation appears little better than an unmeaning ceremony, practiſed by rote from ancient cuſtom; and very properly makes a part of the *receipt for an epic poem* humourouſly laid down after the exact model of mechanical imitation, in the Spectator. Our author, with ſimple and unaffected dignity, thus opens at once into his ſubject;

Of all the Lombards, by their trophies known,
Who ſought fame ſoon, and had her favour long,
King ARIBERT beſt ſeem'd to fill the throne,
And bred moſt buſineſs for heroick ſong.

THIS

THIS conquering monarch, we are ſoon acquainted, was bleſt with an only child, the heroine of the ſtory,

Recorded RHODALIND! whoſe high renown
Who miſs in books not luckily have read;
Or vex'd with living beauties of their own
Have ſhunn'd the wiſe records of lovers dead.

DESCRIPTIONS of female beauty have engaged the powers of poets in every age, who have exhauſted all nature for imagery to heighten their painting; yet the picture has ever been extremely faint and inadequate. Our poet judiciouſly confines his deſcription of Rhodalind to the qualities of her mind, contenting himſelf with general praiſes, though in the high-flown gallantry of the times, of her perſonal charms.

Her looks like empire ſhew'd, great above pride;
Since pride ill counterfeits exceſſive height:
But Nature publiſh'd what ſhe fain would hide,
Who for her deeds, not beauty, lov'd the light.

To

To make her lowly mind's appearance leſs,
She us'd ſome outward greatneſs for diſguiſe;
Eſteem'd as pride the cloyſt'ral lowlineſs,
And thought them proud who even the proud deſpiſe.

Oppreſſors big with pride, when ſhe appear'd,
Bluſh'd, and believ'd their greatneſs counterfeit;
The lowly thought they them in vain had fear'd;
Found virtue harmleſs, and nought elſe ſo great.

Her mind (ſcarce to her feeble ſex a-kin)
Did as her birth, her right to empire ſhow;
Seem'd careleſs outward, when employ'd within;
Her ſpeech, like lovers watch'd, was kind and low.

THE court of Aribert could not want men of high rank and accompliſhments to pay their devotions at ſuch a ſhrine. Among theſe, "OSWALD the great, and greater GONDIBERT" moved in the moſt exalted ſphere of renown. Theſe noble perſonages

perſonages are characterized and contraſted with ſo maſterly a hand, that it would be an injury not to tranſcribe the whole.

In courts, prince Oſwald coſtly was and gay,
Finer than near vain kings their fav'rites are!
Outſhin'd bright fav'rites on their nuptial day;
Yet were his eyes dark with ambitious care.

Duke Gondibert was ſtill more gravely clad,
But yet his looks familiar were, and clear;
As if with ill to others never ſad,
Nor tow'rds himſelf could others practiſe fear.

The Prince could, porpoiſe-like, in tempeſts play,
And in court ſtorms on ſhip-wreck'd greatneſs feed;
Not frighted with their fate when caſt away,
But to their glorious hazards durſt ſucceed.

The Duke would laſting calms to courts aſſure,
As pleaſant gardens we defend from winds;
For he who buſ'neſs would from ſtorms procure,
Soon his affairs above his manage finds.

Oſwald

Oſwald in throngs the abject people ſought
With humble looks; who ſtill too late will know
They are ambition's quarry, and ſoon caught
When the aſpiring eagle ſtoops ſo low.

The Duke did theſe by ſteady virtue gain;
Which they in action more than precept taſte;
Deeds ſhew the good, and thoſe who goodneſs feign
By ſuch ev'n through their vizards are outfac't.

Oſwald in war was worthily renown'd;
Though gay in courts, coarſely in camps could live;
Judg'd danger ſoon, and firſt was in it found;
Could toil to gain what he with eaſe did give.

Yet toils and dangers through ambition lov'd,
Which does in war the name of virtue own:
But quits that name when from the war remov'd,
As rivers theirs when from their channels gone.

The Duke (as reſtleſs as his fame in war)
With martial toil could Oſwald weary make,
And calmly do what he with rage did dare,
And give ſo much as he might deign to take.

Him as their founder cities did adore;
The court he knew to ſteer in ſtorms of ſtate;
In fields, a battle loſt he could reſtore,
And after force the victors to their fate.

OF theſe great rivals, Gondibert was he whom the king had deſtined for his ſon-in-law, and the heir of his throne; and Rhodalind too, in the privacy of her own breaſt, had made the ſame choice. This is related in a manner little inferior to Shakeſpear's famous deſcription of concealed love.

Yet ſadly it is ſung, that ſhe in ſhades,
Mildly as mourning doves, love's ſorrows felt;
Whilſt in her ſecret tears, her freſhneſs fades,
As roſes ſilently in lymbecks melt.

GONDIBERT, however, though of a nature by no means unſuſceptible of the tender paſſion, had not as yet felt it for a particular object; and Oſwald, who ſtood forth as the public ſuitor to the princeſs,

was incited by no other motive than ambition. Not Rhodalind herſelf (ſays the poet)

Could he affect, but ſhining in her throne.

His cauſe was powerfully pleaded with the princeſs by his ſiſter Gartha, with whom we are next brought acquainted. A bold, full, majeſtic beauty; and a correſponding mind, high, reſtleſs, and aſpiring, are her diſtinguiſhing features. The prince and duke were urged on to ambitious purſuits by their reſpective armies, which, juſt returned from conqueſt, lay encamped, the one at Breſcia, and the other at Bergamo. That of Gondibert was compoſed of hardy youth whom he had ſelected from his father's camp, and educated in martial diſcipline under his own inſpection. Temperance, chaſtity, vigilance, humanity, and all the high virtues of chivalry, remarkably diſtinguiſh

diſtinguiſh theſe young ſoldiers from thoſe of later times. Beauty, indeed, commanded no leſs regard amongſt them than in a modern camp; but it was an object of paſſion, and not of appetite; and was the powerful engine in their education which inſpired them with noble and exalted ſentiments. This is an idea on which our author, true to the principles of chivalry, very frequently enlarges, and always with peculiar force and dignity. In the preſent inſtance it is thus finely expreſſed:

But, though the Duke taught rigid diſcipline,
He let them beauty thus at diſtance know;
As prieſts diſcover ſome more ſacred ſhrine,
Which none muſt touch, yet all to it may bow.

When thus, as ſuitors, mourning virgins paſs
Thro' their clean camp, themſelves in form they draw,
That they with martial reverence may grace
Beauty, the ſtranger, which they ſeldom ſaw.

They vayl'd their enſigns as it by did move,
Whilſt inward, as from native conſcience, all
Worſhip'd the poet's darling godhead, Love;
Which grave philoſophers did Nature call.

INDEED, the influence of this paſſion in its pureſt and moſt exalted ſtate during the courſe of education, is a ſubject that might, perhaps, ſhine as much in the hands of a moraliſt as of a poet.

THE ſoldiers of Oſwald were his father's brave veterans, in whoſe arms he had been bred. The ſtory thus opened, and our attention awakened to the expectation of important events, the firſt canto is cloſed.

THE ſecond canto introduces us to a ſolemn annual hunting, held by Duke Gondibert in commemoration of a great victory gained on this day by his grandſire. His train was adorned by many gallant and noble perſons, the friends of his family, and commanders in his army.

The hunting, which is deſcribed with much poetical ſpirit, terminates in a combat. As Gondibert and his party are returning weary homeward, an ancient ranger haſtily brings the tidings that Oſwald, who had lain in ambuſh with a body of choſen horſe, is advancing upon them. The Duke, rejecting all counſels of flight, prepares to receive his foes; and with an account of their principal leaders, and the order of their march, the canto concludes.

A PARLEY between the chiefs now ſucceeds, in which the character of each is well preſerved. Oſwald warmly accuſes his rival for uſurping his claims on the princeſs and the kingdom. Gondibert defends himſelf with temper, and diſavows all ambitious deſigns. The other diſdains accommodation; and the conference ends in a generous agreement to decide their differences in ſingle fight.

When every thing is prepared for the combat, Hubert, the brother of Oſwald, ſteps forth with a general challenge to the oppoſite party. This is inſtantly accepted, and ſerves for a prelude to ſo many others, that a general engagement ſeems likely to enſue; when Oſwald reproves their diſobedient ardour: and, upon Hubert's inſiſting to ſhare his fate from the rights of brotherhood, it is at length decided that three perſons of each party ſhould enter the liſts along with their generals. The duel then comes on, in the fourth canto; in which Oſwald, Hubert, Paradine and Dargonet, are ſeverally matched with Gondibert; Hurgonil, the lover of Orna, the Duke's ſiſter; and Arnold and Hugo, generous rivals in Laura. Deſcriptions of battle are ſo frequent in epic poetry, that ſcarcely any circumſtances of variety are left to diverſify them. Homer and his imitators have attempted

novelty

novelty in the multiplicity of their combats by every poſſible variation of weapon, poſture, and wound. They conſidered the human body with anatomical nicety; and dwelt with a ſavage pleaſure upon every idea of pain and horror that ſtudied butchery could excite. I ſhall leave it to the profeſſed admirers of antiquity to determine under what head of poetical beauty ſuch objects are to be ranged. The terrible is certainly a principal ſource of the ſublime; but a ſlaughter-houſe or a ſurgery would not ſeem proper ſtudies for a poet. D'avenant has drawn little from them. His battles are rendered intereſting chiefly by the character and ſituation of the combatants. When Arnold, the favoured lover of Laura, is ſlain by Paradine, Hugo, who had overthrown his antagoniſt, ſprings to avenge his rival, with theſe truly gallant expreſſions:

Vain conqueror, ſaid Hugo then, return!
Inſtead of laurel, which the victor wears,
Go gather cypreſs for thy brother's urn,
And learn of me to water it with tears.

Thy brother loſt his life attempting mine;
Which cannot for Lord Arnold's loſs ſuffice:
I muſt revenge, unlucky Paradine!
The blood his death will draw from Laura's eyes.

We rivals were in Laura; but, tho' ſhe
My griefs derided, his with ſighs approv'd,
Yet I, in love's exact integrity,
Muſt take thy life for killing him ſhe lov'd.

His generoſity, however, was fatal both to his foe and himſelf.

Hubert, diſabled by a wound in his arm, is diſhonoured by receiving his life from his conqueror; upon which occaſion the poet thus beautifully apoſtrophiſes:

O Honour, frail as life, thy fellow flower!
Cheriſh'd, and watch'd, and hum'rouſly eſteem'd,
Then worn for ſhort adornments of an hour;
And is, when loſt, no more than life redeem'd.

THE two chiefs are ſtill left cloſely engaging; and when Hurgonil approaches to aſſiſt his lord, he is warmly commanded to retire. At length, after many mutual wounds, Oſwald falls.

THE death of the Prince at the ſame time takes off all reſtraint from his party, and incites them to revenge. Led by the wounded Hubert, old Vaſco, and Borgio, they attack the hunters, who, beſides the fatigue of the chace, are repreſented as ſomewhat inferior in number. A furious battle, the ſubject of the fifth canto, now enſues. Gondibert ſhines forth in all the ſplendor of a hero. By his proweſs his friends are reſcued, and the oppoſite leaders overthrown in various ſeparate encounters; and by his military ſkill the brave veterans of Oſwald are defeated. The whole deſcription of the battle is warm and animated.

IN

In Gondibert's generous lamentation over the fallen, every heart muſt ſympathize with the following pathetic tribute to the rival lovers:

Brave Arnold and his rival ſtrait remove,
Where Laura ſhall beſtrew their hallow'd ground;
Protectors both, and ornaments of love;
This ſaid, his eyes out wept his wideſt wound.

Tell her now theſe, love's faithful ſaints, are gone,
The beauty they ador'd ſhe ought to hide;
For vainly will love's miracles be ſhewn,
Since lover's faith with theſe brave rivals dy'd.

Say little Hugo never more ſhall mourn,
In noble numbers, her unkind diſdain;
Who now, not ſeeing beauty, feels no ſcorn;
And wanting pleaſure, is exempt from pain.

When ſhe with flowers Lord Arnold's grave ſhall ſtrew,
And hears why Hugo's life was thrown away,
She on that rival's hearſe will drop a few,
Which merits all that April gives to May.

The Duke now draws off his remaining friends towards Bergamo: but on the journey,

journey, overcome by fatigue and loſs of blood, he falls into a deadly ſwoon. His attendants, amidſt their anxiety and confuſion upon this event, are ſurpriſed, in the ſixth canto, with the approach of a ſquadron of horſe. This, however, proves to be a friendly body, led by old Ulfin, who, after recovering the Duke by a cordial, declares himſelf to have been a page to his grandſire, and gives a noble relation of the character and exploits of his great maſter. The rumour of Oſwald's attack brought him to the relief of Gondibert; and we have a deſcription, which will be thought too much bordering upon the ludicrous, of the ſtrange confuſion among his maimed veterans, who in their haſte had ſeized upon each other's artificial limbs. This unſightly troop, with the deficiencies of hands, arms, legs and eyes, can ſcarcely, with all the poet's art, be rendered a re-

ſpectable

ſpectable object. Such inſtances of faulty judgment are frequent in the writings of an age which was characterized by vigour of imagination rather than correctneſs of taſte. Ulfin leads the Duke to the houſe of the ſage Aſtragon, where, with the approach of night, the canto and the firſt book conclude.

In the beginning of the ſecond book, the poet carries us with Hurgonil and Tybalt and their noble dead, to Verona. The diſtant turrets firſt appearing, and then the great objects opening, one by one; the river, the palace, the temple, and the amphitheatre of Flaminius, form a landſcape truly noble and pictureſque. The view of the temple gives occaſion to one of thoſe elevated religious ſentiments which dignify this poem.

This to ſoothe heaven the bloody Clephes built;
As if heaven's king ſo ſoft and eaſy were,

So

So meanly hous'd in heaven, and kind to guilt,
That he would be a tyrant's tenant here.

We have then a lively deſcription of a city morning; with the various and uncertain rumours of the late event, among the people. The reſt of the canto is employed in a debate, rather tedious, though intermixed with fine ſentiments, concerning the propriety of granting funeral rites to thoſe who had periſhed in the quarrel.

The progreſs of the fatal news is traced in the next canto. Aribert appears ſitting in council in all the regal dignity. Tybalt relates the ſtory. The king, in a majeſtic ſpeech, complains of the toils and cares of empire, and predicts the baneful conſequences likely to enſue. A more intereſting ſcene is then diſcloſed, in which Tybalt declares the melancholy events of the combat

bat to Rhodalind and the other ladies of the court. Great art is ſhewn in the delicate ambiguity by which they are prepared to receive the tidings. Laura is overpowered by her loſs; and, calling on Arnold's name, is conveyed away by her female attendants. This tender ſcene of ſorrow is finely contraſted by the abrupt entrance of Gartha, in all the wild pomp of mingled rage and grief.

No ſooner was the pity'd Laura gone,
But Oſwald's ſiſter, Gartha the renown'd,
Enters as if the world was overthrown,
Or in the tears of the afflicted drown'd.

Unconquer'd as her beauty was her mind,
Which wanted not a ſpark of Oſwald's fire;
Ambition lov'd, but ne'er to love was kind;
Vex'd thrones did more than quiet ſhades deſire.

Her garments now in looſe neglect ſhe wore,
As ſuited to her wild diſhevell'd hair.

In the fury of her paſſion ſhe breaks out into execrations againſt the innocent.

Blaſted be all your beauties, Rhodalind!
Till you a ſhame and terror be to ſight;
Unwing'd be Love, and ſlow as he is blind,
Who with your looks poiſon'd my brother's ſight!

At length ſhe mounts her chariot, and flies with the wings of revenge to the veteran camp at Breſcia. The terror impreſſed on the people by her haſty departure is imaged with great ſublimity.

She ſeem'd their city's Genius as ſhe paſs'd,
Who, by their ſins expell'd, would ne'er return.

The third canto brings us to Breſcia, where Hubert's arrival with the dead body of Oſwald excites every emotion of ſurprize, grief and fury in the breaſts of the brave veterans. They ſpend the night

in this ſtorm of contending paſſions; and at day-break aſſemble round the tent of Hubert, who by a noble harangue gives aditional fire to their revenge. They inſtantly arm, and demand to be led to Bergamo; when Gartha arrives. She turns their vengeance againſt the court, where ſhe repreſents the triumph of Gondibert's faction, and the diſhonour caſt upon their own. The rage diſcovered in her countenance, overpowering the ſymptoms of grief, is painted with amazing grandeur in the following ſimile:

The Sun did thus to threat'ned nature ſhow
His anger red, whilſt guilt look'd pale in all,
When clouds of floods did hang about his brow;
And then ſhrunk back to let that anger fall.

This tempeſt is, however, allayed in the next canto by the arrival of the wife Hermagild;

Hermegild; who, though grown aged in war and politics, is poſſeſſed with a youthful paſſion for Gartha. He ſolemnly binds his ſervices to their party, for the reward of Gartha's love; but perſuades them to ſubmit to more cautious and pacific meaſures. Gartha returns with him to the court; and the funeral of Oſwald with Roman rites, "Which yet the world's laſt law had not forbid," is deſcribed in the remaining part of the canto.

FROM ſcenes of rage and tumult the poet then leads us to the quiet ſhades of philoſophy in the houſe of Aſtragon. This change is not better calculated for the reader's relief, than for a diſplay of the richneſs and elevation of the writer's mind. That the friend of Hobbes ſhould deſpiſe the learned lumber of the ſchools will not be thought extraordinary; but that he ſhould diſtinctly mark out ſuch

plans of acquiring knowledge as have ſince been purſued with the greateſt ſucceſs, may well be deemed a remarkable proof of high and comprehenſive genius. In Aſtragon's domain is a retired building, upon which is written in large letters, GREAT NATURE'S OFFICE. Here ſit certain venerable ſages, ſtiled *Nature's Regiſters*, buſied in recording what is brought them by a throng called their *Intelligencers*. Theſe men are diverſly employed in exploring the haunts of beaſts, of birds, and of fiſhes, and collecting obſervations of their manners, their prey, their increaſe, and every circumſtance of their œconomy. Near this place is NATURE'S NURSERY, ſtocked with every ſpecies of plants, of which the ſeveral properties and virtues are diligently examined. Is it not ſtriking to find in the *houſe of Aſtragon* ſo exact a model of the *ſchool of Linnæus?*

WE

WE are next led to the CABINET OF DEATH; a receptacle for ſkeletons and anatomical curioſities of every kind: and from thence, by a pleaſing analogy, to the library, or, as it is termed, the MONUMENT OF BANISH'D MINDS. The feelings of his gueſts on entering this room are thus deſcribed:

Where, when they thought they ſaw in well-ſought books
  Th' aſſembled ſouls of all that men held wiſe,
It bred ſuch awful rev'rence in their looks
  As if they ſaw the bury'd writers riſe.

THE poet then goes through a particular ſurvey of the authors, diſtinguiſhed into their ſeveral periods, countries, and profeſſions; in which he exhibits a great extent of learning, and, much more to his honour, a ſound and liberal judgment of what is truly valuable in learning. Of this, his account of the polemic divines will be thought no unfavourable ſpecimen.

About this ſacred little book did ſtand
Unwieldy volumes, and in number great;
And long it was ſince any reader's hand
Had reach'd them from their unfrequented ſeat.

For a deep duſt (which time does ſoftly ſhed,
Where only time does come) their covers bear;
On which grave ſpiders ſtreets of webs had ſpread,
Subtle, and ſlight, as the grave writers were.

In theſe heaven's holy fire does vainly burn,
Nor warms, nor lights, but is in ſparkles ſpent;
Where froward authors with diſputes have torn
The garment ſeamleſs as the firmament.

If the ſubjects of this canto appear more noble and elevated than thoſe which uſually employ the epiſodes of heroic poetry, that of the enſuing one muſt ſtrike with ſtill ſuperior dignity. Having acquainted us with the philoſophy of his admired ſage, the poet now, by a beautiful kind of allegory, inſtructs us in his religion. Aſtragon had dedicated three temples, to PRAYER, to PENITENCE, and

to

TO PRAISE. The *Temple of Prayer* is deſcribed as a building quite plain, open, and without bells; ſince nothing ſhould tempt or ſummon to an office to which our own wants invite us. The duty of *Penitence* being a ſeverity unpleaſing to nature, its *temple* is contrived, by its ſolemn and uncommon appearance, to catch the ſenſe. It is a vaſt building of black marble, hung with black, and furniſhed with that "dim religious light" which poets have ſo finely employed to excite kindred ideas of gloom and melancholy: but none, I think, have painted it with ſuch ſtrength of colouring as our author:

Black curtains hide the glaſs; whilſt from on high
A winking lamp ſtill threatens all the room,
As if the lazy flame juſt now would die:
Such will the ſun's laſt light appear at doom.

A tolling bell calls to the temple; and

every other circumſtance belonging to it is imagined with great propriety and beauty.

But the poet's greateſt exertions are reſerved for his favourite *temple of Praiſe*. A general ſhout of joy is the ſummons to it. The building, in its materials and architecture, is gay and ſplendid beyond the moſt ſumptuous palace. The front is adorned with figures of all kinds of muſical inſtruments; all, as he moſt beautifully expreſſes it,

That joy did e'er invent, or breath inſpir'd,
Or flying fingers touch'd into a voice.

The ſtatues without, the pictures within, the decorations, and the choir of worſhippers, are all ſuited with nice judgment, and deſcribed with genuine poetry. This diſtinguiſhed canto concludes with theſe

theſe noble ſtanzas, the ſum and moral, as it were, of the whole.

Praiſe is devotion fit for mighty minds;
The diff'ring world's agreeing ſacrifice;
Where heaven divided faiths united finds:
But prayer in various diſcord upward flies.

For Prayer the ocean is, where diverſly
Men ſteer their courſe, each to a ſev'ral coaſt;
Where all our intereſts ſo diſcordant be
That half beg winds by which the reſt are loſt.

By penitence when we ourſelves forſake,
'Tis but in wiſe deſign on piteous heav'n;
In praiſe we nobly give what God may take,
And are without a beggar's bluſh forgiv'n.

Its utmoſt force, like powder's, is unknown;
And tho' weak kings exceſs of Praiſe may fear,
Yet when 'tis here, like powder, dangerous grown,
Heav'n's vault receives what would the palace tear.

The laſt thought will be termed, in this cold age, a conceit; and ſo may every

thing that diſtinguiſhes wit and poetry from plain ſenſe and proſe.

The wonders of the *houſe of Aſtragon* are not yet exhauſted.

To Aſtragon heaven for ſucceſſion gave
One only pledge, and BIRTHA was her name.

THIS maid, her father's humble diſciple and aſſiſtant, educated in the boſom of rural ſimplicity, is rendered a more charming object than even the renowned Rhodalind upon her throne.

Courts ſhe ne'er ſaw, yet courts could have undone
With untaught looks and an unpractis'd heart;
Her nets the moſt prepar'd could never ſhun,
For Nature ſpread them in the ſcorn of Art.

BUT I check my deſire of copying more from this exquiſitely pleaſing picture. My intention is to excite curioſity, not

not to gratify it. I hope I have already done enough for that purpoſe; and ſince the reſt of this unfiniſhed ſtory may be comprized in a ſhort compaſs, I ſhall proceed, with but few interruptions, to conclude a paper already ſwelled to an unexpected bulk.

THAT the unpractiſed Birtha ſhould entertain an unreſiſted paſſion for the nobleſt of his ſex; and that Gondibert, whoſe want of ambition alone had ſecured him from the charms of Rhodalind, ſhould bow to thoſe of his lovely hoſteſs and handmaid, will be thought a very natural turn in the ſtory; upon which, however, the reader may foreſee the moſt intereſting events depending. The progreſs of their love, though ſcarcely known to themſelves, is ſoon diſcovered by the ſage Aſtragon. This is expreſſed by the poet with a very fine turn of a common thought.

When

When all theſe ſymptoms he obſerv'd, he knows,
From Alga, which is rooted deep in ſeas,
To the high Cedar that on mountains grows,
No ſov'reign herb is found for their diſeaſe.

THE remainder of this poem, conſiſting of a third book, written during the author's impriſonment, is compoſed of ſeveral detached ſcenes, in which the main plot lies ripening for future action. Rivals are raiſed to Birtha. Flattering advances from the court, and more open declarations of love from Rhodalind, are in vain employed to aſſail the conſtancy of Gondibert. Various conflicts of paſſion ariſe, and intereſting ſituations, well imagined, and painted in lively colours. Much is given, as in the former parts, to the introduction of elevated ſentiment; with one example of which I ſhall finiſh my quotations. Several well-born youths are placed about the perſon of Gondibert as his pages, whoſe education

conſiſts

conſiſts of the following great leſſons from their lord:

But with the early ſun he roſe, and taught
  Theſe youths by growing Virtue to grow great,
Shew'd greatneſs is without it blindly ſought,
  A deſperate charge which ends in baſe retreat.

He taught them ſhame, the ſudden ſenſe of ill;
  Shame, nature's haſty conſcience, which forbids
Weak inclination ere it grows to will,
  Or ſtays raſh will before it grows to deeds.

He taught them Honour, Virtue's baſhfulneſs;
  A fort ſo yieldleſs that it fears to treat;
Like power it grows to nothing, growing leſs;
  Honour, the moral conſcience of the great.

He taught them Kindneſs; ſoul's civility,
  In which, nor courts, nor cities have a part;
For theirs is faſhion, this from falſhood free,
  Where love and pleaſure know no luſt nor art.

And Love he taught; the ſoul's ſtol'n viſit made
  Tho' froward age watch hard, and law forbid;

Her-

Her walks no ſpy has trac'd, nor mountain ſtaid;
Her friendſhip's cauſe is as the loadſtone hid.

He taught them love of Toil; Toil which does keep
Obſtructions from the mind, and quench the blood;
Eaſe but belongs to us like ſleep, and ſleep,
Like opium, is our med'cine, not our food.

THE plot is at length involved in ſo many intricate and apparently unſurmountable difficulties, that it is ſcarce poſſible to conceive a ſatisfactory termination. Perhaps the poet was ſenſible of a want of power to extricate himſelf, and choſe thus to ſubmit to a voluntary bankruptcy of invention, rather than hazard his reputation by going further. In his poſtſcript, indeed, he excuſes himſelf on account of ſickneſs and approaching diſſolution. However diſappointed we may be by his abrupt departure from ſcenes which he has filled with confuſion, we ought not to forget the pleaſures already

ready received from them. "If (ſays he to his reader, with more than the ſpirit of a dying man) thou art one of thoſe who has been warmed with poetic fire, I reverence thee as my judge." From ſuch a judicature, this NOBLE FRAGMENT, would, I doubt not, acquire for him what the critic laments his having loſt, "the poſſeſſion of that true and permanent glory of which his large ſoul appears to have been full *."

* Diſc. on Poetical Imitation.

AN

ENQUIRY

INTO THOSE KINDS OF

DISTRESS

WHICH EXCITE

AGREEABLE SENSATIONS.

IT is undoubtedly true, though a phænomenon of the human mind difficult to account for, that the repreſentation of diſtreſs frequently gives pleaſure; from which general obſervation many of our modern writers of tragedy and romance

mance ſeem to have drawn this inference, that in order to pleaſe, they have nothing more to do than to paint diſtreſs in natural and ſtriking colours. With this view, they heap together all the afflicting events and diſmal accidents their imagination can furniſh; and when they have half broke the reader's heart, they expect he ſhould thank them for his agreeable entertainment. An author of this claſs ſits down, pretty much like an inquiſitor, to compute how much ſuffering he can inflict upon the hero of his tale before he makes an end of him; with this difference, indeed, that the inquiſitor only tortures thoſe who are at leaſt reputed criminals; whereas the writer generally chooſes the moſt excellent character in his piece for the ſubject of his perſecution. The great criterion of excellence is placed in being able to draw tears plentifully; and con-

cluding we ſhall weep the more, the more the picture is loaded with doleful events, they go on, telling

——— of ſorrows upon ſorrows
Even to a lamentable length of woe.

A MONARCH once propoſed a reward for the diſcovery of a new pleaſure; but if any one could find out a new torture, or non-deſcript calamity, he would be more entitled to the applauſe of thoſe who fabricated books of entertainment.

BUT the ſprings of pity require to be touched with a more delicate hand; and it is far from being true that we are agreeably affected by every thing that excites our ſympathy. It ſhall therefore be the buſineſs of this eſſay to diſtinguiſh thoſe kinds of diſtreſs which are pleaſing in the repre-

repreſentation, from thoſe which are really painful and diſguſting.

THE view or relation of mere miſery can never be pleaſing. We have, indeed, a ſtrong ſympathy with all kinds of miſery; but it is a feeling of pure unmixed pain, ſimilar in kind, though not equal in degree, to what we feel for ourſelves on the like occaſions; and never produces that melting ſorrow, that thrill of tenderneſs, to which we give the name of pity. They are two diſtinct ſenſations, marked by very different external expreſſion. One cauſes the nerves to tingle, the fleſh to ſhudder, and the whole countenance to be thrown into ſtrong contractions; the other relaxes the frame, opens the features, and produces tears. When we cruſh a noxious or loathſome animal, we may ſympathize ſtrongly with the pain it ſuffers, but with far different

emotions from the tender ſentiment we feel for the dog of Ulyſſes, who crawled to meet his long-loſt maſter, looked up, and died at his feet. Extreme bodily pain is perhaps the moſt intenſe ſuffering we are capable of, and if the fellow-feeling with miſery alone was grateful to the mind, the exhibition of a man in a fit of the tooth-ach, or under a chirurgical operation, would have a fine effect in a tragedy. But there muſt be ſome other ſentiment combined with this kind of inſtinctive ſympathy, before it becomes in any degree pleaſing, or produces the ſweet emotion of pity. This ſentiment is love, eſteem, the complacency we take in the contemplation of beauty, of mental or moral excellence, called forth and rendered more intereſting, by circumſtances of pain and danger. Tenderneſs is, much more properly than ſorrow, the ſpring of tears; for it affects us in that manner,

manner, whether combined with joy or grief; perhaps more in the former caſe than the latter. And I believe we may venture to aſſert, that no diſtreſs which produces tears is wholly without a mixture of pleaſure. When Joſeph's brethren were ſent to buy corn, if they had periſhed in the deſart by wild beaſts, or been reduced (as in the horrid adventures of a Pierre de Vaud) to eat one another, we might have ſhuddered, but we ſhould not have wept for them. The guſh of tears breaks forth when Joſeph made himſelf known to his brethren, and fell on their neck, and kiſſed them. When Hubert prepares to burn out prince Arthur's eyes, the ſhocking circumſtance, of itſelf, would only affect us with horror; it is the amiable ſimplicity of the young prince, and his innocent affection to his intended murderer, that draws our tears, and excites that tender ſorrow which we

love to feel, and which refines the heart while we do feel it.

We ſee, therefore, from this view of our internal feelings, that no ſcenes of miſery ought to be exhibited which are not connected with the diſplay of ſome moral excellence, or agreeable quality. If fortitude, power, and ſtrength of mind are called forth, they produce the ſublime feelings of wonder and admiration: if the ſofter qualities of gentleneſs, grace, and beauty, they inſpire love and pity. The management of theſe latter emotions is our preſent object.

And let it be remembered, in the firſt place, that the misfortunes which excite pity muſt not be too horrid and overwhelming. The mind is rather ſtunned than ſoftened by great calamities. They are little circumſtances that work moſt

ſenſibly

ſenſibly upon the tender feelings. For this reaſon, a well-written novel generally draws more tears than a tragedy. The diſtreſſes of tragedy are more calculated to amaze and terrify, than to move compaſſion. Battles, torture and death are in every page. The dignity of the characters, the importance of the events, the pomp of verſe and imagery intereſt the grander paſſions, and raiſe the mind to an enthuſiaſm little favourable to the weak and languid notes of pity. The tragedies of Young are in a fine ſtrain of poetry, and the ſituations are worked up with great energy; but the pictures are in too deep a ſhade: all his pieces are full of violent and gloomy paſſions, and ſo over-wrought with horror, that inſtead of awakening any pleaſing ſenſibility, they leave on the mind an impreſſion of ſadneſs mixed with terror. Shakeſpeare is ſometimes guilty of preſenting ſcenes too

ſhocking. Such is the trampling out of Gloſter's eyes; and ſuch is the whole play of Titus Andronicus. But Lee, beyond all others, abounds with this kind of images. He delighted in painting the moſt daring crimes, and cruel maſſacres; and though he has ſhewn himſelf extremely capable of raiſing tenderneſs, he continually checks its courſe by ſhocking and diſagreeable expreſſions. His pieces are in the ſame taſte with the pictures of Spagnolet, and there are many ſcenes in his tragedies which no one can reliſh who would not look with pleaſure on the flaying of St. Bartholomew. The following ſpeech of Marguerite, in the maſſacre of Paris, was, I ſuppoſe, intended to expreſs the utmoſt tenderneſs of affection.

Die for him! that's too little; I could burn
Piece-meal away, or bleed to death by drops,
Be flay'd alive, then broke upon the wheel,
Yet with a ſmile endure it all for Guiſe:

And

And when let looſe from torments, all one wound,
Run with my mangled arms and cruſh him dead.

IMAGES like theſe will never excite the ſofter paſſions. We are leſs moved at the deſcription of an Indian tortured with all the dreadful ingenuity of that ſavage people, than with the fatal miſtake of the lover in the Spectator, who pierced an artery in the arm of his miſtreſs as he was letting her blood. Tragedy and romance-writers are likewiſe apt to make too free with the more violent expreſſions of paſſion and diſtreſs, by which means they loſe their effect. Thus an ordinary author does not know how to expreſs any ſtrong emotion otherwiſe than by ſwoonings or death; ſo that a perſon experienced in this kind of reading, when a girl faints away at parting with her lover, or a hero kills himſelf for the loſs of his miſtreſs, conſiders it as the eſtabliſhed

etiquette upon ſuch occaſions, and turns over the pages with the utmoſt coolneſs and unconcern; whereas real ſenſibility, and a more intimate knowledge of human nature, would have ſuggeſted a thouſand little touches of grief, which though ſlight, are irreſiſtible. We are too gloomy a people. Some of the French novels are remarkable for little affecting incidents, imagined with delicacy, and told with grace. Perhaps they have a better turn than we have for this kind of writing.

A JUDICIOUS author will never attempt to raiſe pity by any thing mean or diſguſting. As we have already obſerved, there muſt be a degree of complacence mixed with our ſorrows to produce an agreeable ſympathy; nothing, therefore, muſt be admitted which deſtroys the grace and dignity of ſuffering; the imagination muſt have an amiable figure to dwell

dwell upon; there are circumſtances ſo ludicrous or diſguſting, that no character can preſerve a proper decorum under them, or appear in an agreeable light. Who can read the following deſcription of Polypheme without finding his compaſſion entirely deſtroyed by averſion and loathing?

——————His bloody hand
Snatch'd two unhappy of my martial band,
And daſh'd like dogs againſt the ſtony floor,
The pavement ſwims with brains and mingled gore;
Torn limb from limb, he ſpreads his horrid feaſt,
And fierce devours it like a mountain beaſt,
He ſucks the marrow, and the blood he drains,
Nor entrails, fleſh, nor ſolid bone remains.

Or that of Scylla,

In the wide dungeon ſhe devours her food,
And the fleſh trembles while ſhe churns the blood.

Deformity is always diſguſting, and the imagination cannot reconcile it with the idea of a favourite character; therefore the poet and romance-writer are fully juſtified in giving a larger ſhare of beauty to their principal figures than is uſually met with in common life. A late genius, indeed, in a whimſical mood, gave us a lady with her noſe cruſhed for the heroine of his ſtory; but the circumſtance ſpoils the picture; and though in the courſe of the ſtory it is kept a good deal out of ſight, whenever it does recur to the imagination we are hurt and diſguſted. It was an heroic inſtance of virtue in the nuns of a certain abbey, who cut off their noſes and lips to avoid violation; yet this would make a very bad ſubject for a poem or a play. Something akin to this is the repreſentation of any thing unnatural; of which kind is the famous ſtory of the Roman charity, and

for

for this reaſon I cannot but think it an unpleaſing ſubject for either the pen or the pencil,

POVERTY, if truly repreſented, ſhocks our nicer feelings; therefore, whenever it is made uſe of to awaken our compaſſion, the rags and dirt, the ſqualid appearance and mean employments incident to that ſtate muſt be kept out of ſight, and the diſtreſs muſt ariſe from the idea of depreſſion, and the ſhock of falling from higher fortunes. We do not pity Beliſarius as a poor blind beggar; and a painter would ſucceed very ill who ſhould ſink him to the meanneſs of that condition. He muſt let us ſtill diſcover the conqueror of the Vandals, the general of the imperial armies, or we ſhall be little intereſted. Let us look at the picture of the old woman in Otway:

——A wrinkled hag with age grown double,
Picking dry ſticks, and muttering to herſelf;
Her eyes with ſcalding rheum were gall'd and red;
Cold palſie ſhook her head; her hands ſeem'd wither'd;
And on her crooked ſhoulder had ſhe wrapt
The tatter'd remnant of an old ſtrip'd hanging,
Which ſerv'd to keep her carcaſe from the cold;
So there was nothing of a piece about her.

Here is the extreme of wretchedneſs, and inſtead of melting into pity, we ſhould turn away with diſguſt, if we were not pleaſed with it, as we are with a Dutch painting, from its exact imitation of nature. Indeed the author only intended it to ſtrike horror. But how different are the ſentiments we feel for the lovely Belvidera! We ſee none of thoſe circumſtances which render poverty an unamiable thing. When the goods are ſeized by an execution, our attention is turned to *the piles of maſſy plate, and all the ancient, moſt domeſtic ornaments*, which imply grandeur and conſequence; or to ſuch inſtances of their

their hard fortune as will lead us to pity them as lovers: we are ſtruck and affected with the general face of ruin; but we are not brought near enough to diſcern the uglineſs of its features. Belvidera ruined, Belvidera deprived of friends, without a home, abandoned to the wide world—we can contemplate with all the pleaſing ſympathy of pity; but had ſhe been repreſented as really ſunk into low life, had we ſeen her employed in the moſt ſervile offices of poverty, our compaſſion would have given way to contempt and diſguſt. Indeed, we may obſerve in real life, that poverty is only pitied ſo long as people can keep themſelves from the effects of it. When in common language we ſay *a miſerable object*, we mean an object of diſtreſs which, if we relieve, we turn away from at the ſame time. To make pity pleaſing, the object of it muſt not in any view be diſagreeable to the imagination.

tion. How admirably has the author of Clariſſa managed this point? Amidſt ſcenes of ſuffering which rend the heart, in poverty, in a priſon, under the moſt ſhocking outrages, the grace and delicacy of her character never ſuffers even for a moment; there ſeems to be a charm about her which prevents her receiving a ſtain from any thing which happens; and Clariſſa, abandoned and undone, is the object not only of complacence, but veneration.

I would likewiſe obſerve, that if an author would have us feel a ſtrong degree of compaſſion, his characters muſt not be too perfect. The ſtern fortitude and inflexible reſolution of a Cato may command eſteem, but does not excite tenderneſs; and faultleſs rectitude of conduct, though no rigour be mixed with it, is of too ſublime a nature to inſpire com-

compaſſion. Virtue has a kind of ſelf-ſufficiency; it ſtands upon its own baſis, and cannot be injured by any violence. It muſt therefore be mixed with ſomething of helpleſſneſs and imperfection, with an exceſſive ſenſibility, or a ſimplicity bordering upon weakneſs, before it raiſes, in any great degree, either tenderneſs or familiar love. If there be a fault in the maſterly performance juſt now mentioned, it is that the character of Clariſſa is ſo inflexibly right, her paſſions are under ſuch perfect command, and her prudence is ſo equal to every occaſion, that ſhe ſeems not to need that ſympathy we ſhould beſtow upon one of a leſs elevated character; and perhaps we ſhould feel a livelier emotion of tenderneſs for the innocent girl whom Lovelace calls his Roſe-bud, but that the ſtory of Clariſſa is ſo worked up by the ſtrength of colouring, and the force of repeated impreſſions, as to command all our ſorrow.

PITY

PITY ſeems too degrading a ſentiment to be offered at the ſhrine of faultleſs excellence. The ſufferings of martyrs are rather beheld with admiration and ſympathetic triumph than with tears; and we never feel much for thoſe whom we conſider as themſelves raiſed above common feelings.

THE laſt rule I ſhall inſiſt upon is, that ſcenes of diſtreſs ſhould not be too long continued. All our finer feelings are in a manner momentary, and no art can carry them beyond a certain point, either in intenſeneſs or duration. Conſtant ſuffering deadens the heart to tender impreſſions; as we may obſerve in ſailors, and others who are grown callous by a life of continual hardſhips. It is therefore highly neceſſary, in a long work, to relieve the mind by ſcenes of pleaſure and gaiety; and I cannot think it ſo abſurd

ſurd a practice as our modern delicacy has repreſented it, to intermix wit and fancy with the pathetic, provided care be taken not to check the paſſions while they are flowing. The tranſition from a pleaſurable ſtate of mind to tender ſorrow is not ſo difficult as we imagine. When the mind is opened by gay and agreeable ſcenes, every impreſſion is felt more ſenſibly. Perſons of a lively temper are much more ſuſceptible of that ſudden ſwell of ſenſibility which occaſions tears, than thoſe of a grave and ſaturnine caſt: for this reaſon women are more eaſily moved to weeping than men. Thoſe who have touched the ſprings of pity with the fineſt hand, have mingled light ſtrokes of pleaſantry and mirth in their moſt pathetic paſſages. Very different is the conduct of many novel-writers, who, by plunging us into ſcenes of diſtreſs without end or limit, exhauſt the powers,

and before the concluſion either render us inſenſible to every thing, or fix a real ſadneſs upon the mind. The uniform ſtile of tragedies is one reaſon why they affect ſo little. In our old plays, all the force of language is reſerved for the more intereſting parts; and in the ſcenes of common life there is no attempt to riſe above common language: whereas we, by that pompous manner and affected ſolemnity which we think it neceſſary to preſerve through the whole piece, loſe the force of an elevated or paſſionate expreſſion where the occaſion really ſuggeſts it.

HAVING thus conſidered the manner in which fictitious diſtreſs muſt be managed to render it pleaſing, let us reflect a little upon the moral tendency of ſuch repreſentations. Much has been ſaid in favour of them, and they are generally thought

thought to improve the tender and humane feelings; but this, I own, appears to me very dubious. That they exerciſe ſenſibility, is true; but ſenſibility does not increaſe with exerciſe. By the conſtitution of our frame our habits increaſe, our emotions decreaſe, by repeated acts; and thus a wiſe proviſion is made, that as our compaſſion grows weaker, its place ſhould be ſupplied by habitual benevolence. But in theſe writings our ſenſibility is ſtrongly called forth without any poſſibility of exerting itſelf in virtuous action, and thoſe emotions, which we ſhall never feel again with equal force, are waſted without advantage. Nothing is more dangerous than to let virtuous impreſſions of any kind paſs through the mind without producing their proper effect. The awakenings of remorſe, virtuous ſhame and indignation, the glow of moral approbation—if they do not lead to action, grow

leſs and leſs vivid every time they recur, till at length the mind grows abſolutely callous. The being affected with a pathetic ſtory is undoubtedly a ſign of an amiable diſpoſition, but perhaps no means of increaſing it. On the contrary, young people, by a courſe of this kind of reading, often acquire ſomething of that apathy and indifference which the experience of real life would have given them, without its advantages.

ANOTHER reaſon why plays and romances do not improve our humanity is, that they lead us to require a certain elegance of manners and delicacy of virtue which is not often found with poverty, ignorance and meanneſs. The objects of pity in romance are as different from thoſe in real life as our huſbandmen from the ſhepherds of Arcadia; and a girl who will ſit weeping the whole night at the

the delicate diſtreſſes of a lady Charlotte, or lady Julia, ſhall be little moved at the complaint of her neighbour, who, in a homely phraſe and vulgar accent, laments to her that ſhe is not able to get bread for her family. Romance-writers likewiſe make great misfortunes ſo familiar to our ears, that we have hardly any pity to ſpare for the common accidents of life: but we ought to remember, that miſery has a claim to relief, however we may be diſguſted with its appearance; and that we muſt not fancy ourſelves charitable, when we are only pleaſing our imagination.

It would perhaps be better, if our romances were more like thoſe of the old ſtamp, which tended to raiſe human nature, and inſpire a certain grace and dignity of manners of which we have hardly the idea. The high notions of

honour, the wild and fanciful ſpirit of adventure and romantic love, elevated the mind; our novels tend to depreſs and enfeeble it. Yet there is a ſpecies of this kind of writing which muſt ever afford an exquiſite pleaſure to perſons of taſte and ſenſibility; where noble ſentiments are mixed with well-fancied incidents, pathetic touches with dignity and grace, and invention with chaſte correctneſs. Such will ever intereſt our ſweeteſt paſſions. I ſhall conclude this paper with the following tale.

IN

IN the happy period of the golden age, when all the celeſtial inhabitants deſcended to the earth, and converſed familiarly with mortals, among the moſt cheriſhed of the heavenly powers were twins, the offspring of Jupiter, LOVE and JOY. Where they appeared, the flowers ſprung up beneath their feet, the ſun ſhone with a brighter radiance, and all nature ſeemed embelliſhed by their preſence. They were inſeparable companions, and their growing attachment was favoured by Jupiter, who had decreed that a laſting union ſhould be ſolemnized between them as ſoon

as they were arrived at maturer years. But in the mean time the ſons of men deviated from their native innocence; vice and ruin over-ran the earth with giant ſtrides; and Aſtrea, with her train of celeſtial viſitants, forſook their polluted abodes. Love alone remained, having been ſtolen away by Hope, who was his nurſe, and conveyed by her to the foreſts of Arcadia, where he was brought up among the ſhepherds. But Jupiter aſſigned him a different partner, and commanded him to eſpouſe SORROW, the daughter of Até. He complied with reluctance; for her features were harſh and diſagreeable, her eyes ſunk, her forehead contracted into perpetual wrinkles, and her temples were covered with a wreath of cypreſs and wormwood. From this union ſprung a virgin, in whom might be traced a ſtrong reſemblance to both her parents; but

but the ſullen and unamiable features of her mother were ſo mixed and blended with the ſweetneſs of her father, that her countenance, though mournful, was highly pleaſing. The maids and ſhepherds of the neighbouring plains gathered round, and called her PITY. A red-breaſt was obſerved to build in the cabin where ſhe was born; and while ſhe was yet an infant, a dove, purſued by a hawk, flew into her boſom. This nymph had a dejected appearance, but ſo ſoft and gentle a mien that ſhe was beloved to a degree of enthuſiaſm. Her voice was low and plaintive, but inexpreſſibly ſweet; and ſhe loved to lie for hours together on the banks of ſome wild and melancholy ſtream, ſinging to her lute. She taught men to weep, for ſhe took a ſtrange delight in tears; and often, when the virgins of the hamlet were aſſembled at their evening ſports, ſhe

ſhe would ſteal in amongſt them, and captivate their hearts by her tales full of a charming ſadneſs. She wore on her head a garland compoſed of her father's myrtles twiſted with her mother's cypreſs.

One day, as ſhe ſat muſing by the waters of Helicon, her tears by chance fell into the fountain; and ever ſince, the Muſes' ſpring has retained a ſtrong taſte of the infuſion. Pity was commanded by Jupiter to follow the ſteps of her mother through the world, dropping balm into the wounds ſhe made, and binding up the hearts ſhe had broken. She follows with her hair looſe, her boſom bare and throbbing, her garments torn by the briars, and her feet bleeding with the roughneſs of the path. The nymph is mortal, for her mother is ſo; and when ſhe has fulfilled her deſtined

deſtined courſe upon the earth, they ſhall both expire together, and LOVE be again united to JOY, his immortal and long-betrothed bride.

THOUGHTS

THOUGHTS
ON THE
DEVOTIONAL TASTE,
ON
SECTS,
AND ON
ESTABLISHMENTS.

IT is obſerved by a late moſt amiable and elegant writer, that Religion may be conſidered in three different views. As a ſyſtem of opinions, its ſole object is truth; and the only faculty that has any thing to do with it is Reaſon, exerted

NOTE. This Eſſay was firſt printed in 1775, and prefixed to *Devotional Pieces compiled from the Pſalms of David.*

in

in the freeſt and moſt diſpaſſionate enquiry. As a principle regulating our conduct, Religion is a habit, and like all other habits, of ſlow growth, and gaining ſtrength only by repeated exertions. But it may likewiſe be conſidered as a taſte, an affair of ſentiment and feeling, and in this ſenſe it is properly called Devotion. Its ſeat is in the imagination and the paſſions, and it has its ſource in that reliſh for the ſublime, the vaſt, and the beautiful, by which we taſte the charms of poetry and other compoſitions that addreſs our finer feelings; rendered more lively and intereſting by a ſenſe of gratitude for perſonal benefits. It is in a great degree conſtitutional, and is by no means found in exact proportion to the virtue of a character.

It is with relation to this laſt view of the ſubject that the obſervations in this

eſſay are hazarded: for though, as a rule of life, the authority and ſalutary effects of religion are pretty univerſally acknowledged, and though its tenets have been defended with ſufficient zeal, its affections languiſh, the ſpirit of Devotion is certainly at a very low ebb amongſt us, and what is ſurpriſing, it has fallen, I know not how, into a certain contempt, and is treated with great indifference, amongſt many of thoſe who value themſelves on the purity of their faith, and who are diſtinguiſhed by the ſweetneſs of their morals. As the religious affections in a great meaſure riſe and fall with the pulſe, and are affected by every thing which acts upon the imagination, they are apt to run into ſtrange exceſſes; and if directed by a melancholy or enthuſiaſtic faith, their workings are often too ſtrong for a weak head, or a delicate frame; and for this reaſon they have been almoſt excluded

excluded from religious worſhip by many perſons of real piety. It is the character of the preſent age to allow little to ſentiment, and all the warm and generous emotions are treated as romantic by the ſupercilious brow of a cold-hearted philoſophy. The man of ſcience, with an air of ſuperiority, leaves them to ſome florid declaimer who profeſſes to work upon the paſſions of the lower claſs, where they are ſo debaſed by noiſe and nonſenſe, that it is no wonder if they move diſguſt in thoſe of elegant and better-informed minds.

YET there is a devotion, generous, liberal, and humane, the child of more exalted feelings than baſe minds can enter into, which aſſimilates man to higher natures, and lifts him "above this viſible diurnal ſphere." Its pleaſures are ultimate, and, when early cultivated, continue

continue vivid even in that uncomfortable ſeaſon of life when ſome of the paſſions are extinct, when imagination is dead, and the heart begins to contract within itſelf. Thoſe who want this taſte, want a ſenſe, a part of their nature, and ſhould not preſume to judge of feelings to which they muſt ever be ſtrangers. No one pretends to be a judge in poetry or the fine arts, who has not both a natural and a cultivated reliſh for them; and ſhall the narrow-minded children of earth, abſorbed in low purſuits, dare to treat as viſionary, objects which they have never made themſelves acquainted with? Silence on ſuch ſubjects will better become them. But to vindicate the pleaſures of devotion to thoſe who have neither taſte nor knowledge about them, is not the preſent object. It rather deſerves our enquiry, what cauſes have contributed to check the operations of religious

religious impreſſions amongſt thoſe who have ſteady principles, and are well diſpoſed to virtue.

And, in the firſt place, there is nothing more prejudicial to the feelings of a devout heart, than a habit of diſputing on religious ſubjects. Free enquiry is undoubtedly neceſſary to eſtabliſh a rational belief; but a diſputatious ſpirit, and fondneſs for controverſy, give the mind a ſceptical turn, with an aptneſs to call in queſtion the moſt eſtabliſhed truths. It is impoſſible to preſerve that deep reverence for the Deity with which we ought to regard him, when all his attributes, and even his very exiſtence, become the ſubject of familiar debate. Candor demands that a man ſhould allow his opponent an unlimited freedom of ſpeech, and it is not eaſy in the heat of diſcourſe to avoid falling into an

indecent or careleſs expreſſion; hence thoſe who think ſeldomer of religious ſubjects, often treat them with more reſpect than thoſe whoſe profeſſion keeps them conſtantly in their view. A plain man of a ſerious turn would probably be ſhocked to hear queſtions of this nature treated with that eaſe and negligence with which they are generally diſcuſſed by the practiſed Theologian, or the young lively Academic ready primed from the ſchools of logic and metaphyſics. As the ear loſes its delicacy by being obliged only to *hear* coarſe and vulgar language, ſo the veneration for religion wears off by hearing it treated with diſregard, though we ourſelves are employed in defending it; and to this it is owing that many who have confirmed themſelves in the belief of religion, have never been able to recover that ſtrong and affectionate ſenſe of it which they had before they began to enquire

enquire, and have wondered to find their devotion grown weaker when their faith was better grounded. Indeed, ſtrong reaſoning powers and quick feelings do not often unite in the ſame perſon. Men of a ſcientific turn ſeldom lay their hearts open to impreſſion. 'Previouſly biaſſed by the love of ſyſtem, they do indeed attend the offices of religion, but they dare not truſt themſelves with the preacher, and are continually upon the watch to obſerve whether every ſentiment agrees with their own particular tenets.

THE ſpirit of enquiry is eaſily diſtinguiſhed from the ſpirit of diſputation. A ſtate of doubt is not a pleaſant ſtate. It is painful, anxious, and diſtreſſing beyond moſt others: it diſpoſes the mind to dejection and modeſty. Whoever therefore is ſo unfortunate as not to have ſettled his opinions in important points, will

proceed in the ſearch of truth with deep humility, unaffected earneſtneſs, and a ſerious attention to every argument that may be offered, which he will be much rather inclined to revolve in his own mind, than to uſe as materials for diſpute. Even with theſe diſpoſitions, it is happy for a man when he does not find much to alter in the religious ſyſtem he has embraced; for if that undergoes a total revolution, his religious feelings are too generally ſo weakened by the ſhock, that they hardly recover again their original tone and vigour.

SHALL we mention Philoſophy as an enemy to religion? God forbid! Philoſophy,

> Daughter of Heaven, that flow aſcending ſtill
> Inveſtigating ſure the form of things
> With radiant finger points to heaven again.

Yet

Yet there is a view in which ſhe exerts an influence perhaps rather unfavourable to the fervor of ſimple piety. Philoſophy does indeed enlarge our conceptions of the Deity, and gives us the ſublimeſt ideas of his power and extent of dominion; but it raiſes him too high for our imaginations to take hold of, and in a great meaſure deſtroys that affectionate regard which is felt by the common claſs of pious Chriſtians. When, after contemplating the numerous productions of this earth, the various forms of being, the laws, the mode of their exiſtence, we riſe yet higher, and turn our eyes to that magnificent profuſion of ſuns and ſyſtems which aſtronomy pours upon the mind—When we grow acquainted with the majeſtic order of nature, and thoſe eternal laws which bind the material and intellectual worlds—When we trace the footſteps of creative energy through re-

gions of unmeaſured ſpace, and ſtill find new wonders diſcloſed and preſſing upon the view—we grow giddy with the proſpect; the mind is aſtoniſhed, confounded at its own inſignificance; we think it almoſt impiety for a worm to lift its head from the duſt, and addreſs the Lord of ſo ſtupendous a univerſe; the idea of communion with our Maker ſhocks us as preſumption, and the only feeling the ſoul is capable of in ſuch a moment is a deep and painful ſenſe of its own abaſement. It is true, the ſame philoſophy teaches that the Deity is intimately preſent through every part of this complicated ſyſtem, and neglects not any of his works: but this is a truth which is believed without being felt; our imagination cannot here keep pace with our reaſon, and the ſovereign of nature ſeems ever further removed from us in proportion as we enlarge the bounds of his creation.

PHILOSOPHY

PHILOSOPHY repreſents the Deity in too abſtracted a manner to engage our affections. A Being without hatred and without fondneſs, going on in one ſteady courſe of even benevolence, neither delighted with praiſes, nor moved by importunity, does not intereſt us ſo much as a character open to the feelings of indignation, the ſoft relentings of mercy, and the partialities of particular affections. We require ſome common nature, or at leaſt the appearance of it, on which to build our intercourſe. It is alſo a fault of which philoſophers are often guilty, that they dwell too much in generals. Accuſtomed to reduce every thing to the operation of general laws, they turn our attention to larger views, attempt to graſp the whole order of the univerſe, and in the zeal of a ſyſtematic ſpirit ſeldom leave room for thoſe particular and perſonal mercies which are

the food of gratitude. They trace the great outline of nature, but neglect the colouring which gives warmth and beauty to the piece. As in poetry it is not vague and general deſcription, but a few ſtriking circumſtances clearly related and ſtrongly worked up—as in a landſcape it is not ſuch a vaſt extenſive range of country as pains the eye to ſtretch to its limits, but a beautiful, well-defined proſpect, which gives the moſt pleaſure—ſo neither are thoſe unbounded views in which philoſophy delights, ſo much calculated to touch the heart as home views and nearer objects. The philoſopher offers up general praiſes on the altar of univerſal nature; the devout man, on the altar of his heart, preſents his own ſighs, his own thankſgivings, his own earneſt deſires: the former worſhip is more ſublime, the latter more perſonal and affecting.

We are likewiſe too ſcrupulous in our public exerciſes, and too ſtudious of accuracy. A prayer ſtrictly philoſophical muſt ever be a cold and dry compoſition. From an over-anxious fear of admitting any expreſſion that is not ſtrictly proper, we are apt to reject all warm and pathetic imagery, and, in ſhort, every thing that ſtrikes upon the heart and the ſenſes. But it may be ſaid, 'If the Deity be indeed ſo ſublime a being, and if his deſigns and manner are ſo infinitely beyond our comprehenſion, how can a thinking mind join in the addreſſes of the vulgar, or avoid being overwhelmed with the indiſtinct vaſtneſs of ſuch an idea. Far be it from me to deny that awe and veneration muſt ever make a principal part of our regards to the Maſter of the univerſe, or to defend that ſtyle of indecent familiarity which is yet more ſhocking than indifference: but let it be

conſidered that we cannot hope to avoid all improprieties in ſpeaking of ſuch a Being; that the moſt philoſophical addreſs we can frame is probably no more free from them than the devotions of the vulgar; that the ſcriptures ſet us an example of accommodating the language of prayer to common conceptions, and making uſe of figures and modes of expreſſion far from being ſtrictly defenſible; and that, upon the whole, it is ſafer to truſt to our genuine feelings, feelings implanted in us by the God of nature, than to any metaphyſical ſubtleties. He has impreſſed me with the idea of truſt and confidence, and my heart flies to him in danger; of mercy to forgive, and I melt before him in penitence; of bounty to beſtow, and I aſk of him all I want or wiſh for. I may make uſe of an inaccurate expreſſion, I may paint him to my imagination too much in the faſhion

of

of humanity; but while my heart is pure, while I depart not from the line of moral duty, the error is not dangerous. Too critical a ſpirit is the bane of every thing great or pathetic. In our creeds let us be guarded; let us there weigh every ſyllable; but in compoſitions addreſſed to the heart, let us give freer ſcope to the language of the affections, and the overflowing of a warm and generous diſpoſition.

ANOTHER cauſe which moſt effectually operates to check devotion, is ridicule. I ſpeak not here of open deriſion of things ſacred; but there is a certain ludicrous ſtyle in talking of ſuch ſubjects, which, without any ill deſign, does much harm; and perhaps thoſe whoſe ſtudies or profeſſion lead them to be chiefly converſant with the offices of religion, are moſt apt to fall in to this impropriety; for their ideas

ideas being chiefly taken from that ſource, their common converſation is apt to be tinctured with fanciful alluſions to ſcripture expreſſions, to prayers, &c. which have all the effect of a parody, and, like parodies, deſtroy the force of the fineſt paſſage, by aſſociating it with ſomething trivial and ridiculous. Of this nature is Swift's well-known jeſt of "Dearly beloved Roger," which whoever has ſtrong upon his memory, will find it impoſſible to attend with proper ſerioufneſs to that part of the ſervice. We ſhould take great care to keep clear from all theſe trivial aſſociations, in whatever we wiſh to be regarded as venerable.

ANOTHER ſpecies of ridicule to be avoided, is that kind of ſneer often thrown upon thoſe whoſe hearts are giving way to honeſt emotion. There

is

is an extreme delicacy in all the finer affections, which makes them ſhy of obſervation, and eaſily checked. Love, Wonder, Pity, the enthuſiaſm of Poetry, ſhrink from the notice of even an indifferent eye, and never indulge themſelves freely but in ſolitude, or when heightened by the powerful force of ſympathy. Obſerve an ingenuous youth at a well-wrought tragedy. If all around him are moved, he ſuffers his tears to flow freely; but if a ſingle eye meets him with a glance of contemptuous indifference, he can no longer enjoy his ſorrow; he bluſhes at having wept, and in a moment his heart is ſhut up to every impreſſion of tenderneſs. It is ſometimes mentioned as a reproach to Proteſtants, that they are ſuſceptible of a falſe ſhame when obſerved in the exerciſes of their religion, from which Papiſts are free. But I take this to proceed from the purer

nature

nature of our religion; for the leſs it is made to conſiſt in outward pomp and mechanical worſhip, and the more it has to do with the finer affections of the heart, the greater will be the reſerve and delicacy which attend the expreſſion of its ſentiments. Indeed, ridicule ought to be very ſparingly uſed; for it is an enemy to every thing ſublime or tender: the leaſt degree of it, whether well or ill founded, ſuddenly and inſtantaneouſly ſtops the workings of paſſion; and thoſe who indulge a talent that way, would do well to conſider, that they are rendering themſelves for ever incapable of all the higher pleaſures either of taſte or morals. More eſpecially do theſe cold pleaſantries hurt the minds of youth, by checking that generous expanſion of heart to which their open tempers are naturally prone, and producing a vicious ſhame, through which they are deprived of the enjoy-

enjoyment of heroic ſentiments or generous action.

In the next place, let us not be ſuperſtitiouſly afraid of ſuperſtition. It ſhews great ignorance of the human heart, and the ſprings by which its paſſions are moved, to neglect taking advantage of the impreſſion which particular circumſtances, times and ſeaſons, naturally make upon the mind. The root of all ſuperſtition is the principle of the aſſociation of ideas, by which, objects naturally indifferent become dear and venerable, through their connection with intereſting ones. It is true, this principle has been much abuſed: it has given riſe to pilgrimages innumerable, worſhip of relics, and prieſtly power. But let us not carry our ideas of purity and ſimplicity ſo far as to neglect it entirely. Superior natures, it is poſſible, may be equally affected

fected with the ſame truths at all times, and in all places; but we are not ſo made. Half the pleaſures of elegant minds are derived from this ſource. Even the enjoyments of ſenſe, without it, would loſe much of their attraction. Who does not enter into the ſentiment of the Poet, in that paſſage ſo full of nature and truth:

'He that outlives this hour, and comes ſafe home,
'Shall ſtand on tiptoe when this day is named,
'And rouſe him at the name of Criſpian:
'He that outlives this day and ſees old age,
'Will yearly on the vigil feaſt his neighbours,
'And ſay, To-morrow is St. Criſpian.'

But were not the benefits of the victory equally apparent on any other day of the year? Why commemorate the anniverſary with ſuch diſtinguiſhed regard? Thoſe who can aſk ſuch a queſtion, have never attended to ſome of the ſtrongeſt inſtincts

inſtincts in our nature. Yet it has lately been the faſhion, amongſt thoſe who call themſelves rational Chriſtians, to treat as puerile, all attentions of this nature when relative to religion. They would

> Kiſs with pious lips the ſacred earth
> Which gave a Hampden or a Ruſſel birth.

They will viſit the banks of Avon with all the devotion of enthuſiaſtic zeal; celebrate the birth-day of the hero and the patriot; and yet pour contempt upon the Chriſtian who ſuffers himſelf to be warmed by ſimilar circumſtances relating to his Maſter, or the connection of ſentiments of peculiar reverence with times, places, and men which have been appropriated to the ſervice of religion. A wiſe preacher will not, from a faſtidious refinement, diſdain to affect his hearers from the ſeaſon of the year, the anniverſary of a national bleſſing, a remarkable

markable eſcape from danger, or, in ſhort, any incident that is ſufficiently guarded, and far enough removed from what is trivial, to be out of danger of becoming ludicrous.

It will not be amiſs to mention here, a reproach which has been caſt upon devotional writers, that they are apt to run into the language of love. Perhaps the charge would be full as juſt, had they ſaid that Love borrows the language of Devotion; for the votaries of that paſſion are fond of uſing thoſe exaggerated expreſſions, which can ſuit nothing below Divinity; and you can hardly addreſs the greateſt of all Beings in a ſtrain of more profound adoration, than the lover uſes to the object of his attachment. But the truth is, Devotion does in no ſmall degree reſemble that fanciful and elevated kind of love which depends not on the ſenſes.

ſenſes. Nor is the likeneſs to be wondered at, ſince both have their ſource in the love of beauty and excellence. Both are exceeding prone to ſuperſtition, and apt to run into romantic exceſſes. Both are nouriſhed by poetry and muſic, and felt with the greateſt fervour in the warmer climates. Both carry the mind out of itſelf, and powerfully refine the affections from every thing groſs, low, and ſelfiſh.

But it is time to retire; we are treading upon enchanted ground, and ſhall be ſuſpected by many of travelling towards the regions of chivalry and old romance. And were it ſo, many a fair majeſtic idea might be gathered from thoſe forgotten walks, which would well anſwer the trouble of tranſplanting. It muſt however be owned, that very improper language has formerly been uſed on theſe

ſubjects; but there cannot be any great danger of ſuch exceſſes, where the mind is guarded by a rational faith, and the ſocial affections have full ſcope in the free commerce and legitimate connections of ſociety.

HAVING thus conſidered the various cauſes which contribute to deaden the feelings of devotion, it may not be foreign to the ſubject to enquire in what manner they are affected by the different modes of religion. I ſpeak not of opinions; for theſe have much leſs influence upon the heart, than the circumſtances which attend particular perſuaſions. A ſect *may* only differ from an eſtabliſhment, as one abſurd opinion differs from another: but there is a character and caſt of manners belonging to each, which will be perfectly diſtinct; and of a ſect, the character will vary as it is a riſing or a declining

clining ſect, perſecuted or at eaſe. Yet while divines have wearied the world with canvaſſing contrary doctrines and jarring articles of faith, the philoſopher has not conſidered, as the ſubject deſerved, what ſituation was moſt favourable to virtue, ſentiment, and pure manners. To a philoſophic eye, free from prejudice, and accuſtomed to large views of the great polity carried on in the moral world, perhaps varying and oppoſite forms may appear proper, and well calculated for their reſpective ends; and he will neither wiſh entirely to deſtroy the old, nor wholly to cruſh the new.

THE great line of diviſion between different modes of religion, is formed by Eſtabliſhments and Sects. In an infant ſect, which is always in ſome degree a perſecuted one, the ſtrong union and entire affection of its followers, the ſacri-

fices they make to principle, the force of novelty, and the amazing power of ſympathy, all contribute to cheriſh devotion. It riſes even to paſſion, and abſorbs every other ſentiment. Severity of manners impoſes reſpect; and the earneſtneſs of the new proſelytes renders them inſenſible to injury, or even to ridicule. A ſtrain of eloquence, often coarſe indeed, but ſtrong and perſuaſive, works like leaven in the heart of the people. In this ſtate, all outward helps are ſuperfluous, the living ſpirit of devotion is amongſt them, the world ſinks away to nothing before it, and every object but one is annihilated. The ſocial principle mixes with the flame, and renders it more intenſe; ſtrong parties are formed, and friends or lovers are not more cloſely connected than the members of theſe little communities.

It is this kind of devotion, a devotion which thoſe of more ſettled and peaceable times can only gueſs at, which made amends to the firſt Chriſtians for all they reſigned, and all they ſuffered: this draws the martyr to a willing death, and enables the confeſſor to endure a voluntary poverty. But this ſtage cannot laſt long: the heat of perſecution abates, and the fervour of zeal feels a proportional decay. Now comes on the period of reaſoning and examination. The principles which have produced ſuch mighty effects on the minds of men, acquire an importance, and become objects of the public attention. Opinions are canvaſſed. Thoſe who before bore teſtimony to their religion only by patient ſuffering, now defend it with argument; and all the keenneſs of polemical diſquiſition is awakened on either ſide. The fair and generous idea of religious li-

berty, which never originates in the breaſt of a triumphant party, now begins to unfold itſelf. To vindicate theſe rights, and explain theſe principles, learning, which in the former ſtate was deſpiſed, is aſſiduouſly cultivated by the ſectaries; their minds become enlightened, and a large portion of knowledge, eſpecially religious knowledge, is diffuſed through their whole body. Their manners are leſs auſtere, without having as yet loſt any thing of their original purity. Their miniſters gain reſpect as writers, and their pulpit diſcourſes are ſtudied and judicious. The moſt unfavourable circumſtance of this æra is, that thoſe who diſſent, are very apt to acquire a critical and diſputatious ſpirit; for, being continually called upon to defend doctrines in which they differ from the generality, their attention is early turned to the argumentative part of religion; and hence

we ſee that ſermons, which afford food for this taſte, are with them thought of more importance than prayer and praiſe, though theſe latter are undoubtedly the more genuine and indiſpenſible parts of public worſhip.

THIS then is the ſecond period; the third approaches faſt; men grow tired of a controverſy which becomes inſipid from being exhauſted; perſecution has not only ceaſed, it begins to be forgotten; and from the abſence of oppoſition in either kind, ſprings a fatal and ſpiritleſs indifference. That ſobriety, induſtry, and abſtinence from faſhionable pleaſures, which diſtinguiſhed the fathers, has made the ſons wealthy; and, eager to enjoy their riches, they long to mix with that world, a ſeparation from which was the beſt guard to their virtues. A ſecret ſhame creeps in upon them, when they acknow-

acknowledge their relation to a diſeſteemed ſect; they therefore endeavour to file off its peculiarities, but in ſo doing they deſtroy its very being. Connections with the eſtabliſhment, whether of intimacy, buſineſs, or relationſhip, which formerly, from their ſuperior zeal, turned to the advantage of the ſect, now operate againſt it. Yet theſe connections are formed more frequently than ever; and thoſe who a little before, ſoured by the memory of recent ſuffering, betrayed perhaps an averſion from having any thing in common with the Church, now affect to come as near it as poſſible; and, like a little boat that takes a large veſſel in tow, the ſure conſequence is, the being drawn into its vortex. They aim at elegance and ſhow in their places of worſhip, the appearance of their preachers, &c. and thus impoliticly awaken a taſte it is impoſſible they ſhould ever gratify.

They

They have worn off many forbidding ſingularities, and are grown more amiable and pleaſing. But thoſe ſingularities were of uſe: they ſet a mark upon them, they pointed them out to the world, and thus obliged perſons ſo diſtinguiſhed to exemplary ſtrictneſs. No longer obnoxious to the world, they are open to all the ſeductions of it. Their miniſter, that reſpectable character which once inſpired reverence and affectionate eſteem, their teacher and their guide, is now dwindled into the mere leader of the public devotions; or, lower yet, a perſon hired to entertain them every week with an elegant diſcourſe. In proportion as his importance decreaſes, his ſalary ſits heavy on the people; and he feels himſelf depreſſed by that moſt cruel of all mortifications to a generous mind, the conſciouſneſs of being a burden upon thoſe from whom he derives his ſcanty ſupport.

Unhappily,

Unhappily, amidſt this change of manners, there are forms of ſtrictneſs, and a ſet of phraſes introduced in their firſt enthuſiaſm, which ſtill ſubſiſt: theſe they are aſhamed to uſe, and know not how to decline; and their behaviour, in conſequence of them, is awkward and irreſolute. Thoſe who have ſet out with the largeſt ſhare of myſticiſm and flighty zeal, find themſelves particularly embarraſſed by this circumſtance.

When things are come to this criſis, their tendency is evident: and though the intereſt and name of a ſect may be kept up for a time by the generoſity of former ages, the abilities of particular men, or that reluctance which keeps a generous mind from breaking old connections; it muſt, in a ſhort courſe of years, melt away into the eſtabliſhment, the womb and the grave of all other modes of religion.

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AN *Eſtabliſhment* affects the mind by ſplendid buildings, muſic, the myſterious pomp of antient ceremonies; by the ſacredneſs of peculiar orders, habits, and titles; by its ſecular importance; and by connecting with religion, ideas of order, dignity, and antiquity. It ſpeaks to the heart through the imagination and the ſenſes; and though it never can raiſe devotion ſo high as we have deſcribed it in a beginning ſect, it will preſerve it from ever ſinking into contempt. As, to a woman in the glow of health and beauty, the moſt careleſs dreſs is the moſt becoming; but when the freſhneſs of youth is worn off, greater attention is neceſſary, and rich ornaments are required to throw an air of dignity round her perſon: ſo while a ſect retains its firſt plainneſs, ſimplicity and affectionate zeal, it wants nothing an eſtabliſhment could give; but that once declined, the latter becomes far more

more reſpectable. The faults of an eſtabliſhment grow venerable from length of time; the improvements of a ſect appear whimſical from their novelty. Antient families, fond of rank, and of that order which ſecures it to them, are on the ſide of the former. Traders incline to the latter; and ſo do generally men of genius, as it favours their originality of thinking. An eſtabliſhment leans to ſuperſtition, a ſect to enthuſiaſm; the one is a more dangerous and violent exceſs, the other more fatally debilitates the powers of the mind; the one is a deeper colouring, the other a more laſting dye; but the coldneſs and languor of a declining ſect produces ſcepticiſm. Indeed, a ſect is never ſtationary, as it depends entirely on paſſions and opinions; though it often attains excellence, it never reſts in it, but is always in danger of one extreme or the other; whereas an old

eſtabliſhment,

eſtabliſhment, whatever elſe it may want, poſſeſſes the grandeur ariſing from ſtability.

We learn to reſpect whatever reſpects itſelf; and are eaſily led to think that ſyſtem requires no alteration, which never admits of any. It is this circumſtance, more than any other, which gives a dignity to that accumulated maſs of error, the Church of Rome. A fabric which has weathered many ſucceſſive ages, though the architecture be rude, the parts diſproportionate, and overloaded with ornament, ſtrikes us with a ſort of admiration, merely from its having held ſo long together.

The *miniſter* of a ſect, and of an eſtabliſhment, is upon a very different footing. The former is like the popular leader of an army; he is obeyed with enthuſiaſm

enthuſiaſm while he is obeyed at all; but his influence depends on opinion, and is entirely perſonal: the latter reſembles a general appointed by the monarch; he has ſoldiers leſs warmly devoted to him, but more ſteady, and better diſciplined. The diſſenting teacher is nothing if he have not the ſpirit of a martyr; and is the ſcorn of the world, if he be not above the world. The clergyman, poſſeſſed of power and affluence, and for that reaſon choſen from among the better ranks of people, is reſpected as a gentleman, though not venerated as an apoſtle; and as his profeſſion generally obliges him to decent manners, his order is conſidered as a more regular and civilized claſs of men than their fellow-ſubjects of the ſame rank. The diſſenting teacher, ſeparated from the people, but not raiſed above them, inveſted with no power, entitled to no emoluments, if he cannot

cannot acquire for himſelf authority, muſt feel the bitterneſs of dependance. The miniſters of the former denomination cannot fall, but in ſome violent convulſion of the ſtate: thoſe of the latter, when indifference and mutual neglect begin to ſucceed to that cloſe union which once ſubſiſted between them and their followers, loſe their former influence without reſource; the dignity and weight of their office is gone for ever; they feel the inſignificancy of their pretenſions, their ſpirits ſink, and, except they take refuge in ſome collateral purſuit, and ſtand candidates for literary fame, they ſlide into an ambiguous and undecided character; their time is too often ſacrificed to frivolous compliances; their manners loſe their auſterity, without having proportionally gained in elegance; the world does not acknowledge them, for they are not of the

world; it cannot eſteem them, for they are not ſuperior to the world.

Upon the whole, then, it ſhould ſeem, that the ſtrictneſs of a ſect (and it can only be reſpectable by being ſtrict) is calculated for a few finer ſpirits, who make Religion their chief object. As to the much larger number, on whom ſhe has only an imperfect influence, making them decent if not virtuous, and meliorating the heart without greatly changing it; for all theſe the genius of an eſtabliſhment is more eligible, and better fitted to cheriſh that moderate devotion of which alone they are capable. All thoſe who have not ſtrength of mind to think for themſelves, who would live to virtue without denying the world, who wiſh much to be religious, but more to be genteel—naturally flow into the eſtabliſhment. If it offered no motives

to their minds, but ſuch as are perfectly pure and ſpiritual, their devotion would not for that be more exalted, it would die away to nothing; and it is better their minds ſhould receive only a tincture of religion, than be wholly without it. Thoſe too, whoſe paſſions are regular and equable, and who do not aim at abſtracted virtues, are commonly placed to moſt advantage within the pale of the national faith.

All the greater exertions of the mind, ſpirit to reform, fortitude and conſtancy to ſuffer, can be expected only from thoſe who, forſaking the common road, are exerciſed in a peculiar courſe of moral diſcipline; but it ſhould be remembered, that theſe exertions cannot be expected from every character, nor on every occaſion. Indeed, religion is a ſentiment which takes ſuch ſtrong hold

on all the moſt powerful principles of our nature, that it may eaſily be carried to exceſs. The Deity never meant our regards to him ſhould engroſs the mind: that indifference to ſenſible objects, which many moraliſts preach, is not perhaps deſirable, except where the mind is raiſed above its natural tone, and extraordinary ſituations call forth extraordinary virtues.

If the peculiar advantages of a ſect were well underſtood, its followers would not be impatient of thoſe moderate reſtraints which do not riſe to perſecution, nor affect any of their more material intereſts: for, do they not bind them cloſer to each other, cheriſh zeal, and keep up the love of liberty? What is the language of ſuch reſtraints? Do they not ſay, with a prevailing voice, Let the timorous and the worldly depart; no one ſhall

ſhall be of this perſuaſion, who is not ſincere, diſintereſted, conſcientious. It is notwithſtanding proper, that men ſhould be ſenſible of all their rights, aſſert them boldly, and proteſt againſt every infringement; for it may be of advantage to bear what yet it is unjuſtifiable in others to inflict.

NEITHER would diſſenters, if they attended to their real intereſts, be ſo ambitious as they generally are, of rich converts. Such converts only accelerate their decline; they relax their diſcipline, and they acquire an influence very pernicious in ſocieties which ought to breathe nothing but the ſpirit of equality.

SECTS are always ſtrict in proportion to the corruption of eſtabliſhments and the licentiouſneſs of the times, and they are uſeful in the ſame proportion. Thus

the auſtere lives of the primitive Chriſtians counterbalanced the vices of that abandoned period; and thus the Puritans in the reign of Charles the Second ſeaſoned with a wholeſome ſeverity the profligacy of public manners. They were leſs amiable than their deſcendants of the preſent day; but to be amiable was not the object: they were of public utility; and their ſcrupulous ſanctity (carried to exceſs, themſelves only conſidered) like a powerful antiſeptic, oppoſed the contagion breathed from a moſt diſſolute court. In like manner, that ſect, one of whoſe moſt ſtriking characteriſtics is a beautiful ſimplicity of dialect, ſerved to check that ſtrain of ſervile flattery and Gothic compliment ſo prevalent in the ſame period, and to keep up ſome idea of that manly plainneſs with which one human being ought to addreſs another.

THUS have we ſeen that different modes of religion, though they bear little good-will to each other, are nevertheleſs mutually uſeful. Perhaps there is not an eſtabliſhment ſo corrupt, as not to make the groſs of mankind better than they would be without it. Perhaps there is not a ſect ſo eccentric, but that it has ſet ſome one truth in the ſtrongeſt light, or carried ſome one virtue, before neglected, to its utmoſt height, or looſened ſome obſtinate and long-rooted prejudice. They anſwer their end; they die away; others ſpring up, and take their place. So the purer part of the element, continually drawn off from the mighty maſs of waters, forms rivers, which, running in various directions, fertilize large countries; yet, always tending towards the ocean, every acceſſion to their bulk or grandeur but precipitates their courſe, and haſtens their re-union with the common

mon reſervoir from which they were ſeparated.

In the mean time, the devout heart always finds aſſociates ſuitable to its diſpoſition, and the particular caſt of its virtues; while the continual flux and reflux of opinions prevents the active principles from ſtagnating. There is an analogy between things material and immaterial. As, from ſome late experiments in philoſophy it has been found, that the proceſs of vegetation reſtores and purifies vitiated air; ſo does that moral and political ferment which accompanies the growth of new ſects, communicate a kind of ſpirit and elaſticity neceſſary to the vigour and health of the ſoul, but ſoon loſt amidſt the corrupted breath of an indiſcriminate multitude.

THERE remains only to add, leſt the preceding view of Sects and Eſtabliſhments ſhould in any degree be miſapprehended, that it has nothing to do with the *truth* of opinions, and relates only to the influence which the adventitious circumſtances attending them may have upon the manners and morals of their followers. It is therefore calculated to teach us candour, but not indifference. Large views of the moral polity of the world may ſerve to illuſtrate the providence of God in his different diſpenſations, but are not made to regulate our own individual conduct, which muſt conſcientiouſly follow our own opinions and belief. We may ſee much good in an Eſtabliſhment, the doctrines of which we cannot give our aſſent to without violating our integrity; we may reſpect the tendencies of a Sect, the tenets of which we utterly diſapprove. We may think practices

practices useful which we cannot adopt without hypocrisy. We may think all religions beneficial, and believe of one alone that it is true.

FINIS.

DO NOT CIRCULATE